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A Correct COPY Of Some LETTERS Written to J. M. a Nonconformist Teacher, Concerning the Gift and Forms OF PRAYER.

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THE PREFACE.

THE *Occaſion of theſe Letters, was, from ſome Exceptions taken at a Viſitation-Sermon, preach'd in a Populous and Divided Town of this Kingdom: In which a ſet Liturgy for Publick Worſhip was preferred before Extemporary Effuſions: The Vindication whereof, in another Diſcourſe ſince publiſhed, had the good luck, not only of pleaſing Many, but convincing Some; to their utter abandoning of ſeparate Meetings.*

Hereupon, the Leader of a Conventicle in that Place, finding the Defection of ſome, and fearing the Revolt of more of his Followers; thought fit to

fall foul upon this Sermon; Attacking it with great Fury, to prevent its doing any further Miſchief.

What he ſaid or writ to that purpoſe, you will find anſwer'd in the following Letters; which are here humbly tendred and ſubmitted to the Judgment of the Candid and Impartial Reader.

If there be a ſeeming Air and Pleaſantneſs in ſome of them unbecoming the Gravity of the Subject, the Reader may remember, They are Letters, and not Tracts; and that a greater Freedom and Facetiouſneſs, hath been ever allow'd in Epiſtles, than in Graver Treatiſes.

Beſides, the Author could not think of a better way, to keep the Adverſary to a Point, from which he was extreamly given to wander, than by letting him ſee ſometimes how far he was gone from it; and merrily expoſing his Excurſions.

If

If there be ſometimes a greater Sharpneſs and Severity of Stile; 'tis no more than is neceſſary, where Obſtinacy is added to Error, and Men withſtand all the milder methods of Conviction: A Wound that requir'd at firſt a ſoft and gentle Hand, muſt be more deeply Search'd, when 'tis attended with a Malignity. St. Paul *charg'd* Titus, To rebuke ſome offenders Sharply, that they might be ſound in the Faith, *Tit.* 1. 13. *and himſelf did ſo with the* Galatians; *whom he calls* Fooliſh Galatians, asking, who had [bewitched them, that they ſhould not obey the Truth? *Gal.* 3. 1.] *And certainly, there can be no greater Faſcinatism in Religion, than that of Extempore-Prayer, which hath done more to deſtroy all ſober Piety and Devoton, than all the other Arts and Devices of Deceivers.*

Theſe Letters are ſwoll'n into a greater Number and Bulk, than was

at

at first intended, meerly by the Artifice of the Adversary; whose chief Design was to puzzle and entangle with Quæries, *and to cut out more Work, than he thought either could or would be Finished. But perhaps he may be now sensible of his Mistake: There being nothing Material in his Papers, that is left unanswer'd.*

The Adversary not giving his Consent to the Publishing of his Letters, the Author hath thought fit to leave them to his own Publication. In the mean time, what he hath or shall farther object on this Subject, shall not fail of an Answer as Occasion shall require.

Farewel.

LETTER

LETTER I.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Had this Week a ſight of ſome Papers that have paſt between Mr. *F.* and you, in which finding my ſelf unexpectedly concerned and reflected upon, I have ſent you this in anſwer to what concerns me in them. But

Firſt, I muſt needs tell you in general, that your Papers are ſtuff'd with ſo many frivolous Queries, wherein nothing is either fairly propos'd or wiſely proſecuted, and likewiſe with ſuch impertinent excurſions, wherein you leap from one thing to another, without any coherence of Senſe or Argument, that I aſſure you it was very nauſeous, and a great exerciſe of patience to read them; for when you ſeem to pitch upon any one thing, and there might be ſome hopes of your ſtaying a while, and fairly debating of it, by and by you are gone, and like a Bird that is chaſed, hop from

place to place, and from one thing to another, and no doubt for the ſame reaſon too, for fear of being caught.

But what is worſe, in this inſufferable Ramble of yours, there is no perſon of what Parts, Piety, Place, or Station ſoever can ſcape the laſh of your cenſure, Archbiſhop *Sancroft*, Biſhop *Ken*, Biſhop *Couſins*, Biſhop *Taylor*, all the Reverend Biſhops that compiled the Liturgy, who were ſome of the firſt Reformers, and many of them Martyrs, yea all the Kings and Parliaments that have ever ſince enjoyned the Liturgy, for the Decency and Uniformity of Publick Worſhip, are all arraigned by you: The Tranſlators of the Bible, the Collects, and Canons of the Church. Nothing, how well ſoever compos'd, or how wiſely ſoever enjoyned, can eſcape the Caſtigation of your mercileſs Pen: Among the reſt, I find you unmercifully falling upon me, without giving the leaſt notice; but I aſſure you I take it for a greater honour than diſgrace, to be ranked and reproached with ſuch good Company. One would think Sir, by your Papers, that you were either a Pope, or ſome Oecumenical Biſhop, that uſurped an Authority of cenſuring and condemning all other Biſhops, be-

beſides many other Perſons of very great Worth and Learning, famous in their generations. And yet after all this noiſe, 'tis manifeſt by your Papers, that all this confidence is grounded only on ſome crude indigeſted Notions of Mr. *Baxters*, which have been anſwered a hundred times over by many learned Men; of which yet you take no manner of notice; and indeed it is plain by your Writing that you never read them, and that your Study runs chiefly upon a paultry ſort of Divinity, that's only calculated for the Meridian of a Conventicle.

But 'tis time to come to what concerns me in theſe Papers, which are ſome wiſe Reflections on my Viſitation Sermon: Now tho' this Sermon paſt the Approbation of all the Clergy there preſent, being publiſhed at their Requeſt; and ſince its Publication hath had the Acceptance and good liking of the World, yet you are reſolved it ſhall not paſs Muſter at *Bridgwater*; and tho' you dare not Publiſh any thing againſt it, yet you think fit to have a fling or a flirt at it now and then in a Conventicle, that may ſerve as an Antidote to preſerve your deluded Followers, from the poiſon of it. Certainly Sir, you deſerve to be

Chronicled for a Perſon of incomparable Modeſty, and Candour, and to ſtand upon Record to future Ages, as an Inſtance of the deep Learning and cloſe reaſoning of a Diſſenting Brother.

But what have you to ſay againſt the Sermon? Why

Firſt, it calls your praying in Publick without a Form, by the reproachful name of *extempore* Effuſions: And is it not ſo called by all learned Men who have occaſion to ſpeak or write of it, who yet have no mind to reproach but reform your Devotion? But to ſpeak to the point, are they ſo or not? If they are ſo, that is, words not penn'd but pour'd out of a ſudden, then the Reproach will lie upon ſuch as uſe them, and not upon thoſe that call them by that name.

In your Prayers then, either the Matter and Words are well digeſted, conſidered and compos'd before-hand, and then 'tis a Form of Prayer; or elſe they are left to ſuch ſudden Conceptions and Expreſſions, as their Fancy ſuggeſts upon the place, and then they are no better nor no worſe than *Extempore* Effuſions; if there be a Medium betwixt theſe two, pray let me know it, and you ſhall have your own term. But you do not like the

the word Extemporary, becauſe it implies ſuch an haſtineſs or raſhneſs of expreſſion, as *Solomon* forbids in our Addreſſes unto God; and indeed ſo it does: And I heartily wiſh you would as much abhor the Thing, as you do the Name, and then there might be ſome hopes in time of having ſuch Prayers from you, as are fit for Wiſe Men to hear, and Good Men to join in. Eccl. 5. 2.

But you would have it called by the name of Conceived Prayer, or Conceiving of Prayer; with all my Heart if that will pleaſe you, tho' you muſt own it a prepoſterous courſe to Conceive and bring forth together, and that great care ſhould be taken to prevent Abortion in publick Congregations.

But I perceive by a Paper that I receiv'd this day, that the term of Free Prayer ſeems to carry it from all the reſt; by which I ſuppoſe, you mean a freedom of your own Conceptions and Expreſſions in Prayer, without being bound up to any Form of Prayer of your own or others Compoſing, and ſo it comes all to one, and I am content to let it paſs under that Name; for this being only a diſpute about Words, I am not willing to differ about it.

Secondly, Another thing you complain of in my Sermon, which is a great grievance, is my disparaging the Gift of Prayer as a thing not to be coveted; a very bad thing indeed, if it were true; but how is it prov'd? Why thus, I disparage the Gift of Extemporary Effusions, which I say is not the Gift of Prayer; therefore I disparage the first Gift of Prayer. Most profound reasoning! And yet this is all the proof that can be gather'd from thence for your Assertion; and by this way of Arguing you may prove any thing or nothing, as you shall see occasion.

But I suppose you take the Gift of Prayer to consist in the change and novelty of words, or a faculty of talking to God every day in new and varied Phrases. Now this is that I expos'd, and think it justly deserves it too, as you shall find more at large when I know your mind about it: In the mean time I recommend to you a Book, Entitled, *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, where you may find the admirable Elegancy and Rarity of such Prayers, as they were taken in Short-hand from the most celebrated Preachers in *Scotland*.

Whereas the Gift of Prayer rightly un-

underſtood, lies principally in the Heart, and conſiſts not in pouring out many and new Words, but in pouring out the Soul unto God, and lifting up the Heart to him: and this I am ſo far from diſparaging, that I eſteem it a highly valuable and deſirable Gift.

Now becauſe the Hinge of the Controverſie between us is like to turn upon this Point, I will try for once whether it be poſſible to prevent Excurſions, and to keep you cloſe to it: and to that end, I will firſt propound the Matter in Debate between us, and then give you ſome Arguments to confirm my Senſe and Opinion about it.

The Queſtion then is, Whether the Gift of Prayer doth properly conſiſt in a Faculty of varying Phraſes, and expreſſing our ſelves to God in our own Words? or, Whether it conſiſts in the pious Motions and good Affections of the Heart? Your Papers run plainly on the former, and my Sermon affirms the latter. Here then we are to engage and enter the Liſts; and I warn you once more beforehand to keep cloſe, for I ſhall look on all Excurſions as a downright running away, which you know is the Loſs of a Battel.

First then, I ſhall prove to you, That the Gift of Prayer conſiſts not in Words or Expreſſions, and much leſs in the Change and Variety of them; which I ſhall do by this Argument.

If neither Words in general, nor our own Words in particular, are abſolutely neceſſary and eſſential to the Duty of Prayer, then the Gift of Prayer cannot be ſaid to conſiſt in them:

But neither Words in general, nor our own Words in particular, are abſolutely neceſſary and eſſential to the Duty of Prayer; Therefore the Gift of it cannot conſiſt in them.

The *major* is evident, becauſe the Gift or Faculty of doing any thing is neceſſary to the actual doing and performing of it; and therefore if Words are not neceſſary to Prayer, the Gift of Praying cannot conſiſt in them.

The *minor* conſiſts of two Parts; *viz.* that neither Words in general, nor our own Words in particular, are neceſſary and eſſential to the Duty of Prayer: both which I prove thus.

If Prayer may be acceptably performed without the uſe of any Words, and likewiſe without the uſe of our own Words, then neither of them are abſolutely

lutely neceſſary and eſſential to the Duty of Prayer. But Prayer, *&c.*

That both theſe are true, we have plain Evidence and Examples in Holy Scripture; for *Hannah* prayed in her Heart, when her Voice was not heard: and all that ſpeak of mental Prayer (which is the Soul's ſighing out its Deſires unto God) own, that the Duty may be performed by the inward Motions and Operations of the Mind, without the uſe of the Voice, or uttering any thing with the Tongue. 1 Sam. 1. 13.

The Prophet *Zachary* deſcribes the Spirit of Grace and Supplications, by looking upon him whom *they* have pierced, and mourning over him; which imports the inward Compunction of the Soul, but hath no relation to Words and outward Expreſſions: And S. *Paul* ſets forth the Aſſiſtance which the Spirit of God gives in Prayer, not by helping us to utter and expreſs any thing with the Tongue, but *by ſighs and groans that cannot be uttered.* So that Prayer may be performed without any Words; and that it may be without our own Words, is evident by the Experience of many good Chriſtians, who daily ſerve God in the uſe of Forms, which are not Zech. 12. 10. Rom. 8. 26.

their own, but the Words of others: ſo that neither Words in general, nor our own in particular, are abſolutely neceſſary or eſſential to the Duty of Prayer; and conſequently the Gift of Prayer cannot be properly ſaid to conſiſt in them, which was the thing to be proved.

SIR,

I am forced to break off here, intending, God willing, to give you a farther Account of this Matter in my next; in the mean time, when you have chew'd the Cud upon this, I expect your Anſwer. I am,

SIR,

Your affectionate Friend,

March 13. 1696. *and Wellwiſher,*

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER II.

To J. M.

I Was forc'd to break off in my laſt before I had finiſh'd my Argument, which I ſhall therefore purſue a little farther in this, that you may the better ſee the force of it, and how to ſhape your Reply to it: but ſtill I muſt mind you to keep cloſe; for there's all the Danger: and I aſſure you I am more afraid of your Excurſions than of your Arguments.

The Queſtion in Debate is concerning the Gift of Prayer, *ſcil.* Whether it conſiſts in a Faculty of expreſſing our ſelves unto God in our own new and varied Words, or in the pious Motions and Elevations of the Heart unto him.

Againſt the former, which both your Papers and Practice manifeſt to be your Opinion, I argued thus: That we may pray acceptably unto God without any Words, as in mental Prayer; and without our own Words, as in godly Forms; and without new and varied Words, as in ſtanding Publick Liturgies: and there-

therefore the Gift of Prayer cannot conſiſt in any Faculty of Expreſſions, and much leſs in the changeable Novelty and Variety of them. The Antecedent I proved in my laſt, and ſhall do it more fully when I know your Exceptions againſt it: The Conſequence I take to be firm and undeniable; for the Gift of Prayer muſt extend to all ſorts of Prayer, as the Genius does to every Species; for elſe 'tis not the Gift of Prayer in general, but merely a Gift of this or that particular way of Praying; and I think it ſufficiently abſurd to affirm, that there is an acceptable way of Praying without the Gift of Prayer: for then this Gift will be like the Philoſopher's Stone; he that has it may do Wonders, but he that wants it may do well enough without it.

'Tis ſtrange, *Sir*, to me, that a Man of your Sagacity and deep Inſight into Things, ſhould diſcern no better betwixt the Gift of Speech, Utterance, and Elocution, which is applicable to any Subject or Occaſion, and the Gift of Prayer, which is of a different and a higher Nature: and you may as well take a Lawyer's Volubility in Pleading for the Gift of Tongues, and a Phyſician's

an's Readineſs of Diſcourſe concerning Diſeaſes and Medicines for the Gift of Healing, as a Fluency of Words about our Wants and the Supply of them, for the Gift of Prayer; the Life and Soul of which, lies in the inward Deſires and Devotions of the Heart, and not in the Nimbleneſs and Volubility of the Tongue. Before I conclude this Argument, I will recommend this ſhort Remark to your Conſideration, *ſcil.* That the Uſe of Words is to Inform; the End of many Words, to perſwade; the Deſign of new Words to pleaſe: the firſt affects the Mind, the ſecond the Paſſions, the third the Fancy. Now none of theſe are of any Uſe or Conſideration in our Addreſſes unto God; for he is not to be informed by any Words, nor to be perſwaded by many, nor to be pleaſed with new: Theſe things may do much with Men, who are wont to be wrought upon this way; but they have no Force or Efficacy at all with God, who hears the ſilent Language of the Heart, and anſwers the ſecret Sighs and Breathings of a devout Soul. And to think that God either needs or is pleaſed with a fanciful Variety of new Expreſſions, is to form mean and unworthy

thy Notions of him, and to think him ſuch a one as our ſelves.

And now, *Sir*, I fear your Notion of the Gift of Prayer may begin to totter; and unleſs you take ſome ſpeedy Care to prop it up by a firm and cloſe Anſwer, it may be in danger of falling. And thus having ſhewn the Weakneſs of your Opinion, I come now to try the Strength of my own; *ſcil.*

That the Gift of Prayer properly conſiſts in the pious Motions and good Affections of the Heart. And here my Comfort is, that I have the general Concurrence of the moſt judicious and pious Divines of my ſide in this matter; ſo that whatever comes of it, I am like to ſtand or fall with good Company: and that you may the better ſee upon what firm Ground we ſtand, I here preſent you with theſe two Arguments.

Arg. 1. That which beſt enables to the right Performance of the Duty of Prayer, That is properly the Gift of Prayer. This I ſuppoſe will be eaſily granted, for the Faculty of doing any thing well, is commonly ſtiled a Talent or Gift of that thing; and he that performs it in the beſt manner, is ſaid to have attained to the Art or Gift of it:

But

But the inward pious Motions and good Affections of the Heart do beſt enable to the right Performance of the Duty of Prayer; neither can this be well denied, ſeeing the Heart is generally owned to be the chief Spring and Seat of true Devotion, without which the greateſt Readineſs and Copiouſneſs of Speech is but empty Noiſe and vain babling: and therefore the Concluſion muſt hold good, That the divine Art or Gift of Prayer lies principally in the pious Motions and Affections of the Heart.

Arg. 2. That which beſt anſwers the End of Prayer, and tends moſt to the Succeſs and Acceptance of it, That is moſt properly the Gift of Prayer. This no doubt will be granted; for he that prays moſt ſucceſsfully may be ſuppoſed to be beſt endowed with the Gift of it; but the inward hearty Deſires of the Soul beſt anſwer the End of Prayer, and tend moſt to the Succeſs and Acceptance of it: And I think you will not venture to deny this, for the Prayer of the Wicked, with all its Flouriſhes and Enlargements, is an Abomination to the Lord; and a ſhort ſilent Ejaculation darted from a pious and devout Soul, will ſooner pierce the Heavens,

and

and enter the Ears of God, than the loudeſt and longeſt Harangue of the Hypocrite: And therefore the Concluſion muſt be true; *ſcil.* That the divine Art or Gift of Prayer reſides within, and conſiſts chiefly in the pious Motions and good Affections of the Heart. Which was the thing to be proved.

Sir, when you have well conſider'd theſe things, 'tis poſſible you may come to ſome better Underſtanding than you have at preſent in this matter. And becauſe 'tis a double Act of Charity, at once to direct the Shepherd, and to reduce the wandring Sheep miſled by him; give me leave to take a little more pains with you, to ſet you right in a matter of ſo great moment. To that end, as we have already ſeen the Reaſons, ſo let us now weigh the Conſequence of both theſe Opinions; which I will aſſure you are of no ſmall Conſideration in this matter. On the one hand then, the placing of the Gift of Prayer in the Heart, may be a means of ſetting Men upon a ſtricter Watch over it, and keeping it cloſe to the Duty: and becauſe the Imbecility of the Mind is ſuch, that it cannot attend to two or more things at once, theſe may ſerve

to

to prevent thoſe diſtractions, which among other things are occaſioned by the ſtudy of words; it may hinder the rovings and wandrings of the fancy, and help to keep the Mind more intent upon the main work and buſineſs of Prayer; and one would think (Sir) that the natural and pious tendency of this notion to ſo good an end, might have deſerved a little favour, and not have ſuffered you to have fallen ſo unmercifully upon ſo harmleſs and uſeful a thing. Whereas on the other hand, the placing the Gift of Prayer in a faculty of uſing new words and varied phraſes, may be a means to draw off the Soul from minding the Duty, and ſet it a liſtning to the fineneſs and fluency of the words; and this can ſerve only to gratifie itching Ears, and to feed a Worm of Curioſity, which ſends many a gadding up and down to find out the fineſt words and loudeſt voice, and the moſt melting Tone: And this you know has occaſioned a very great giddineſs and inſtability in Religion: Now here again it might be reaſonably expected, that what hath been known to produce ſuch bad effects, might have been a little ſuſpected; and that you would not ſo mighti-

ly triumph and glory in ſo dangerous a Notion.

And now my hand is in, give me leave to tell you ſome of the many miſchiefs that have proceeded from this verbal Gift of Prayer.

Firſt, Some have either willingly or weakly miſtaken this for that extraordinary or ſupernatural Gift of Prayer, that was granted to the Apoſtles; and finding ſometimes their Fancy heated by the fluency and ſound of words, have thought themſelves divinely inſpired. Hence it is they talk ſo much of praying by the Spirit, as if they felt the Holy Ghoſt working and ſpeaking within them, immediately dictating both the matter and words of their Prayers to them, by which means they father upon the Holy Ghoſt, all the haſty and fond productions of their own Brain.

Secondly, This hath led many into a Contempt of all Godly Forms as dead things, and made them place all the life and efficacy of Prayer in this pretended Gift; by which means they are brought to caſt off all regular and ſober Devotion, and turn their Religion into ſpiritual Phrenzy and Enthuſiaſm.

Thirdly, This often proves an occaſion

ſion of great Pride; for many have been puffed up with a vain conceit of this Gift; and finding others ſtruck with an admiration of their parts, eaſily come to admire and fall in Love with themſelves; and think that God as well as Man is delighted to hear them talk. Hence they grow refractory and diſobedient to their Superiours; and think their enjoyning any thing in Publick Worſhip, though merely for Decency and Order, a diſparagement to their Abilities, and not fit to be laid on Perſons of their intereſt and familiarity with God.

Fourthly and Laſtly, This Gift has proved a great inſtrument of Diviſion; and is at this day the greateſt Idol and Support of all our Sectaries; amongſt whom, he that pleaſes and excels in this Gift, ſhall be ſure to have moſt Followers. An inſtance of this I think you find at home, where the Leader of another Conventicle begins to draw from yours; and ſurely Sir, 'tis time to look about you; for if his Tongue runs nimbler than yours, your Diſciples may be apt to leave you in the Lurch, and run after him; or if his Voice be more Charming, or his Tone more Taking, you are loſt that way too.

In ſhort, when Men leave the well compoſed Devotion of an eſtabliſhed Church, they have nothing to fix them; which makes them ſtagger and reel like a drunken Man, running from one Sect to another, till they have run themſelves out of all Religion, and ſettled at laſt in downright Atheiſm and Infidelity. Of this too many ſad Inſtances may be given.

I could tell you, *Sir*, of other direful effects of their miſtaken Notion of the Gift of Prayer; but I am loth to be tedious. I am,

SIR,

March 19. 1656. *Your humble Servant,*

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER III.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Received yours of the 20*th* Inſtant, which for the moſt part is juſt as I feraed, a downright running away, as any that had Eyes in his Head might have eaſily ſeen: And to make you ſenſible of it, I muſt again tell you what we are about, and then ſhew you how far you are gone from it.

The Queſtion then between us, is concerning the Gift of Prayer, *ſc.* Whether it conſiſts in an Ability of Expreſſions, or in the pious Motions and Elevations of the Heart. Now though I gave you a ſtrict charge to keep cloſe to this, and repeated it over and over again, leſt you ſhould forget it, yet Firſt,

In the very beginning of your Letter, you are gone from thence into *Devonſhire*, and tell me, how the Catchpoles laid in wait, and purſued thoſe that haunted Conventicles; and is not this a plain Excurſion? Within a few Lines of this, I find you running after Biſhop

Ken, to let him know, that you did not call him Biſhop; and then give the reaſon for it too, becauſe he hath no Dioceſs; but yet becauſe he once had one, and there may be ſome good in him, you are content that he ſhould be called the late Biſhop: And is not this a pretty Excurſion think you, and very much to the Gift of Prayer?

Immediately on this, you are running to the preſent Biſhop to acquaint him, that he is no Intruder, but that the Dioceſs is his, whatever perſons may ſay or think to the contrary: Admirable cloſe to the point! Preſently on this, you are running into *France*, to tell King *James* to his Face, that he can only be call'd the late King, but none muſt think or call him King now; for the Judges have given their Opinion, ſay you, that 'tis Criminal to give him that Title: Is not this wonderful pertinent? or rather, is it not an Excurſion with a witneſs?

Shortly, hereupon you put the Queſtion, whether a Conventicle be an illegal Aſſembly? This I ſuppoſe, you take to be more home to the Gift of Prayer, becauſe it ſpeaks up for the Place where this Talent is vented: But is there no difference think you, between what

what is Eſtabliſhed, and what is only wink'd at, and ſuffered to go unpuniſhed? If you will needs have an anſwer, your breaking the Bond of Peace and Unity, by Conventicles, is near about as lawful, as breaking the Bond of Wedlock by Adultery; and if either be permitted, 'tis juſt as *Moſes*'s Bill of Divorce, not for the goodneſs of the thing, but for the hardneſs of Mens Hearts.

After this you tell me, that to the Catalogue of Biſhops that lie under your Cenſure, you can add more, and there is no doubt of this, though I thought I had made your Authority and Cenſures wide enough, when I extended it to all other Biſhops: But ſtill you ſee how admirably you ſpeak to the purpoſe.

Soon after this, you tell me a ſad Story of yours and others misfortunes, in falling under the Miſeries of bad times, having your Studies rifled, and your Books taken from you: Now though this be a ſad Calamity, and juſtly deſerves Pity, yet here 'tis a deplorable Excurſion, and ſerves for no other End, but to let us know, that you are forc'd now to ſpeak without Book, which will eaſily be believed. Next you take a Leap into the *Apocrypha*, and fall upon the Stories of

Tobit and *Judith*; and to ſhew what a Canonical Man you are, Damn all the Apocryphal Books as unworthy to be read by Chriſtians upon any occaſion. Admirable well to the purpoſe ſtill, and about as near to it as Eaſt is to the Weſt.

In reading a little farther, I find you taking another Jump into *France*; for ſpeaking of conceived Prayer, you very wittily fall upon the Conception of the Prince of *Wales*, and wonder at two things; firſt how he crept into the World; and after that, how he crept into the Liturgy: Yea, you would fain know, whether he were not an extemporary Effuſion; as if he had crept into Free Prayer too: But pray Sir, what hath the Conception of Prayer to do with the Conception of Princes? Muſt not Publick Worſhip be well perform'd, think you, if left to the preſent and vain Conceptions of ſuch rambling Brains?

But I have not time to go through your Letter, which is a meer Rapſody of Non-ſequitur's, and nothing to the purpoſe. And as I told you of former Papers, that 'twas a great exerciſe of Patience to read them, ſo I may ſay over and above of this, that 'tis a per;

fect

ſeet Pennance to go through with it: However, I reſolve (God willing) let the Task be as irkſome and unpleaſant as it will, to go through by the next. In the mean time, as far as we have gone already, what think you Sir, are the forementioned Particulars, Excurſions or no? Or rather, are they not a plain running away? Were you not ſufficiently warned and told of this, that 'twas the loſs of the Battel? And yet Sir, could you not ſtand the firſt Brunt, but muſt betake your ſelf to flight upon the firſt Attack? And can you think I will run all the Kingdom over after you? yea, out of the Kingdom too, and croſs the Seas in the purſuit? At preſent Sir, I have no time for it, but hereafter I may have more time to follow the chaſe, and to hunt you out of all your Subterfuges, and lurking Holes. But what's to be done at preſent?

Why all theſe, and many more Impertinencies of the ſame kind, are clearly to be lopt off, and thrown away; and I muſt be forc'd to do with your Letter as Men do with their Gardens, Weed it, and throw aſide all the Traſh and Trumpery of it, that we may diſcern the good Seed, if there be any. And

to

to tell you truly, your Letter is ſo over-run with Weeds, that 'twill take up more time than I can ſpare at preſent, to Weed it. All that you ſay of Biſhop *Hall* and Biſhop *Wilkins* (though it ſhall be fully examined in its due time) is at preſent Impertinent, becauſe it does not yet come to bear upon any part of the Argument, to which I muſt bring you back in my next: In a word, all the Rubbiſh of your Letter muſt be removed; and when that is gone, we ſhall ſee what little Senſe and Reaſon is left.

But really Sir, I am loth to let this Letter altogether paſs without ſomething for your Edification; and becauſe matters muſt be inſtilled into you by degrees, I will tell you where the miſtake lies; truly your great unhappineſs, (of which I gave you a hint in my laſt) is, that you cannot diſcern betwixt the Gift of Speech, and the Gift of Prayer; between which there is a manifeſt difference; but inſtead of that, you diſtinguiſh between the Gift and Grace of Prayer, where there is none; for here if the terms are Identical, and import the ſame thing, the diſtinction muſt be frivolous; and that they are ſo, you may eaſily diſcern by this ſhort Argument.

A Gift or Talent of any thing, is a faculty of doing that thing aright, and as it ſhould be, as I proved in my laſt.

Now do but apply this to Prayer, and then the Gift of Prayer will be a faculty of performing the Duty of Prayer aright, and as it ſhould be; and then tell me, Whether the Grace of Prayer be any thing elſe than an Ability of the right performance of that Duty; and then you will ſee the Gift and Grace of Prayer to be both one.

If you ſay ſome offer to God only the Calves of their Lips, and put him off only with words, when the Heart goes not with them.

Very true Sir, now theſe are ſaid to have the Gift of Speech, or an Ability of Expreſſion by pouring out ſo many words.

But they have not the Gift or Grace of Prayer, which is the doing the Duty aright, and making the Heart accompany the words.

I hope Sir, you are not ſo ſlow of underſtanding as not to diſcern this, though I find you are ſlow enough, and therefore if you do not take it preſently, let me adviſe you to read it over

and

and over again, and 'tis possible by Study, and beating your Brains, it may enter into them. I am,

SIR,

March 22. 1696. *Yours*

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Have try'd once, whether it were poſſible to keep you cloſe to a Point, and to prevent Excurſions; but I find it a very difficult (if not impoſſible) Task: For, let a Man warn you never ſo oft, and point to the very place where he would have you ſtand and keep to, yet you wriggle and fly off from it, in ſpight of ones Teeth, and like an Eel, ſlip away, when one thinks to hold you faſteſt. However, I will not utterly deſpair of you upon the firſt Experiment: And therefore will try again once more, Whether there be any way or means of fixing you: and though you have ſhamefully run away once into groſs and palpable Excurſions; yet let me perſwade you to rally again, and ſee whether you can ſtand a ſecond Brunt.

To that end, let us ſtate the Queſtion once more; for I find you creeping out there, and complain; That I make you put the Gift of Prayer there, where nei-

neither you nor any body elſe ever placed it, (*i. e.*) In Words and Expreſſions; whereas you put it (as you ſay) not in the words themſelves, but in the Ability of Expreſſions; as appears by your Definition of the Gift of Prayer; which you ſtyle [An Ability of expreſſing our ſelves ſuitably to God in Prayer on all Occaſions.] Remember this then and ſtick to it, That whereas I put the Gift of Prayer in the good Motions and Affections of the Heart; you put it, in an Ability of Expreſſions. So that (I hope) now we are agreed about the State of the Queſtion, and ſhall hear of that no more.

Now againſt your Opinion thus ſtated, I preſent you with this Argument.

If the Duty of Prayer may be performed without an Ability of Expreſſions, then the Gift of Prayer cannot conſiſt in an Ability of Expreſſions.

But the Duty of Prayer may be performed without an Ability of Expreſſions.

Therefore, the Gift of Prayer cannot conſiſt in that Ability.

The *Minor* I prove thus:

He that wants a Tongue, or hath loſt the uſe of it, hath no Ability of Expreſſions.

But

But he that wants a Tongue, or hath loſt the uſe of it, may perform the Duty of Prayer. *Ergo,*

The *Major* muſt be granted, unleſs you will ſay, that a Man is able to ſpeak and expreſs himſelf without a Tongue. Neither can the *Minor* be denied, unleſs you will deny to Deaf and Dumb Men, all faculty of praying; which hath been allowed to them, by lifting up their Hearts unto God. And therefore the Concluſion muſt follow of Courſe, That the Duty of Prayer may be performed without an Ability of Expreſſions.

So that, the *Minor* Propoſition of the Argument ſtands firm, and there is no getting out there.

Come we then to the *Major*, which I prove thus. That, without which the Duty of Prayer may be performed, cannot be the Gift of Prayer.

Therefore if the Duty of Prayer may be performed without an Ability of Expreſſions, the Gift of Prayer cannot lie in it.

The Antecedent muſt be granted, becauſe otherwiſe, the Duty of Prayer may be performed without the Gift of Prayer. Now, though any Wiſe Man would think this abſurd enough, and pity a Man

Man that was reduc'd to the neceſſity of affirming it; yet, becauſe you cannot ſee the Abſurdity of it, (for I find you affirming that the Duty of Prayer may be, and often is performed without the Gift of it) I will therefore give you One Argument that may ſerve as a Pair of Spectacles to help your weak Eyes to diſcern it; and that is this: If the Gift of Prayer be the Power or Ability of performing the Act or Duty of Prayer, then the Duty of Prayer cannot be performed without the Gift of Prayer.

But the Gift of Prayer is the Power or Ability of performing the Act or Duty of Prayer.

Therefore the Act or Duty cannot be perform'd without the Gift.

The *Minor* is evident, and hath been proved before, *viz.* That the Gift of Prayer is the Power, Faculty, or Ability, of performing the Act of Prayer. The Conſequence of the *Major* is thus proved:

The Act or Duty cannot be performed, without the Power or Ability of Acting or Performing it.

And therefore, If the Gift of Prayer be the Power or Ability of performing the Act or Duty of Prayer; then the

Duty

Duty of Prayer cannot be performed without the Gift.

The Antecedent is proved by this; Becauſe otherwiſe, a Man may be ſaid to be able to do a thing without the Power or Ability of doing it: Which is all one as to ſay, A Man can do that which he cannot do. And if you cannot ſee the Abſurdity and Contradiction of this, you are ſtark Blind, and can ſee nothing. So that the Major too of the Argument with its Conſequence, being lock'd faſt, 'twill be hard for you to ſcape there too: And I hope you will not deny the Concluſion.

And now (Sir) being beaten out of theſe Subterfuges, I fear you are caught. And 'tis good enough for you; for you would take no warning, but would needs be hopping up and down, till you fell into the hands of ſome body or other that would hold you faſt. And now like a Bird in a Snare, the more you Flutter, the more you'll be entangled.

But ſtay, let us look about and ſee, whether there be any Loop-hole or Cranny for you to get out at; for if there be, you'll ſurely find it, and run clear away.

The only Loop-hole I can eſpy at preſent is, what I find you nibbling at, and ſeeking to creep out at already; and that is this: Though there be one ſort of Prayer that may be performed without an Ability of Expreſſions, as Mental Prayer, yet there is another ſort that cannot, as Vocal Prayer. So that there may be ſome hopes, that That at leaſt may lie in the Ability of Expreſſions.

But pray (Sir) Muſt not the Gift of Prayer extend to all ſorts of Prayer? Otherwiſe it cannot be the Gift of Prayer in general, but the Gift of this or that way of praying.

But the clearing of this will require a little Logick. You muſt know then, that Prayer in general is the *Genus*, and Mental and Vocal Prayer are the two *Species* of it. Now (you know) the *Genus* muſt be common to both the *Species*, (as Animal is to *Homo & Brutum*) for, *Tota Natura Generis continetur in qualibet Specie.* So that the Nature, and conſequently, the Gift of Prayer muſt lie in ſomething that is Common both to Mental and Vocal Prayer.

Now, what ſhould that be that is Common to both theſe? Why, It cannot be the Ability of Expreſſions, ſince Mental

Mental Prayer hath nothing to do with that, and may be perform'd without it; and therefore muſt needs be ſomething elſe; which I believe, you will find at laſt to be, the good Motions and Elevations of the Heart.

Now by this (Sir) you may ſee, that neither Words, nor an Ability of uttering them, is any neceſſary and eſſential part of Prayer; for God neither needs them nor values them, unleſs the Heart go with them. He knows our Neceſſities before we ask; and hates the much ſpeaking and vain Repetitions of the Hypocrite.

So that Words are only an accidental Adjunct or Circumſtance of Prayer that relates to our ſelves; and all the uſe of them is, to help us to joyn and agree in putting up the ſame Petitions. And here, the fewer of them the better, if the Heart be ſincere and ſound in offering them; for *Solomon* minds us [*That God is in Heaven, and we upon Earth; and therefore our words unto him ſhould be few.*]

And now I think, this Loop-hole is pretty well ſtopt, and 'twill be hard for you to get out there.

You ſee (Sir) how I am forc'd to watch you as narrowly as the Cat watch-

es the Mouſe: And I am miſtaken if you are not hunted into the Trap; where I muſt leave you to work your ſelf out as well as you can. And if you yet creep out, and run away after this, I'll defy any Mouſe or Squirrel to outdo you.

Sir, I expect your Anſwer as ſoon as conveniently you may; but be ſure to keep cloſe to the Argument and Matter in hand: For you cannot think how nauſeous and troubleſome to Men of Senſe, your Impertinencies and Excurſions are. Let me hear then no more of King *James*, or Biſhop *Ken*, nor of *Tobit* and *Judith*, and other Apocryphal Stories; nor of the Troubles of the former, or the Happineſs of the preſent Times; for theſe things are all impertinent, and nothing to our purpoſe. Not a word neither as yet, of Biſhop *Hall* or Biſhop *Wilkins*; for though what you offer ſhall be fairly heard in due time, yet that time is not yet come. For though in Divine Revelations, Authority may go before Reaſon (becauſe we are to believe what God ſaith, though it may ſeem without, above or againſt Reaſon) yet, in Humane Teſtimonies, Reaſon is to go before Authority: Becauſe

cauſe we are not to believe any Man, without ſhewing good Reaſon for what he ſaith. So that we are in the right way for ſatisfaction; and therefore you muſt not go out of it your ſelf, nor ſeek to draw me out of it by any impertinent Excurſions.

But you tell me, you have other things wherein you deſire ſatisfaction.

Ay (Sir) that is one of your Scurvy-Tricks, and a plain Hint and Intimation of your deſign of running away. I'll hear nothing of that till we have finiſhed the Point in hand. No (Sir) I will not ſtep a Foot out of the way, though it were to prove, That *Extempore* Prayer was brought into theſe Kingdoms by *Romiſh* Emiſſaries; which in due time ſhall be proved to you by as full and clear Evidence, as any Wiſe Man can deſire. You ſee (Sir) what pains I am forced to take, to hedge you in, and keep you from flying off. And if after all this, you will ſtill be gadding and running away, you will not only appear to be a Fugitive and Volatile Animal; but likewiſe ſhew, What an Able Champ-

pion you are like to make to defend the Diſſenting Cauſe. In the mean time, I am

SIR,

March 25. 1697. *Your Humble Servant*

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER V.

To J. M.

SIR,

HEaring nothing from you theſe three or four Poſts, I have had the leiſure to go on further in the Peruſal of your Letter: Where I find you cannot yet come off from that frivolous Diſtinction between the Gift and Grace of Prayer; for you tell me theſe Terms muſt not be confounded, but carefully diſtinguiſhed by all that would ſpeak Intelligibly in this Matter.

Now I think theſe Terms have rather confounded than clear'd up your Underſtanding in this Matter; and hindred you from Speaking or Writing any thing Intelligibly about it. For this is a Diſtinction without a Difference, as I proved in my third Letter. But finding you are not very quick or ready to take a thing, I'll try to make it a little more plain and obvious to your Underſtanding; for if it appear, that the Gift of Prayer is the Grace of Prayer; and the Grace the Gift of it, you will then

ſee the Abſurdity of it, which you may by this Argument.

The Faculty of performing the Duty of Prayer aright, is the Gift of Prayer.

But the Faculty of performing the Duty of Prayer aright, is likewiſe the Grace of Prayer. *Ergo*, The Gift of Prayer is the ſame thing with the Grace of Prayer. *Et viciſſim.*

The Major is proved from the nature of a Gift or Talent of a thing. (As) Of Writing, Reading, Speaking, Painting, Carving, *&c.* which are nothing elſe but Abilities of doing theſe ſeveral things in the beſt Manner. The Minor muſt remain firm, till you can ſhew any more in the Grace of Prayer, than a gracious Gift vouchſafed by the Spirit of God, to diſpoſe and enable to the right performance of the Duty of Prayer. And therefore the Concluſion muſt follow. That theſe Terms are Identical; and import the ſame thing.

So that really (Sir) This Diſtinction is much like his, who diſtinguiſh'd between Operation and Working; ſaying, that Pepper was hot in Operation, but cold in Working: And 'tis every Jot as abſurd to ſay, that a Man may be hot in the Gift, but cold in the Grace of Prayer.

But

But becauſe I find you too apt to be impos'd upon by Terms and Phraſes without knowing or attending to the true Senſe and Meaning of them, I ſhall for the better clearing of this Matter, enquire,

1. Into the Original of this Diſtinction; Whence it came, and of what ſtanding it is in the World.

2. Into the Occaſion of it: Or, what it is that hath betray'd and miſled ſo many into it.

Firſt then, Whence (Sir) had you this Diſtinction; and in what Mint was it coyn'd?

If you look over the Bible, you will not find this Phraſe of the Gift of Prayer, from one end to the other. You may read there of the Gift of Tongues, and (I think) a Gift of Utterance; but for the Gift of Prayer in thoſe very Terms, you muſt ſeek ſomewhere elſe. And if you are at a loſs for the firſt Term of the Diſtinction, and cannot find the Gift of Prayer there, then pray take the Bible again, and ſee whether you can find the other Term, of the Grace of Prayer there: And if you are at a loſs for that too, and cannot find the Grace of Prayer in thoſe expreſs Terms mentioned;

tioned; Then, to be ſure, that Diſtinction never came from the Holy Scriptures, where neither of the Terms are to be found.

Whence then might it come? And who was the Author of this famous Diſtinction?

Why I have ſearched into ſome of the Centuries after the Apoſtles, to ſee whether any of the Ancient Fathers had heard, or ſpake any thing of it; But as far as my ſearch can reach at preſent, I find no News or Tydings of any ſuch Diſtinction among them, but rather the quite contrary. St. *Auſtine* plainly makes the Terms identical: For he tells us, *Ipſa Oratio inter Gratiæ munera reperitur.* Prayer it ſelf is to be reckon'd among the Works of Grace. St. *Hilary* wills us, *Orare ad Deum non multiloquio, ſed Conſcientia,* (*i. e.*) Not by pouring out many Words, but with the purity of the Heart and Conſcience. St. *Cyprian* tells us, that *Deus non Vocis, ſed Cordis Auditor eſt,* (*i. e.*) God hath no regard to the Voice or any Ability of Expreſſions, but to the Heart only. St. *Baſil* ſpeaking of Prayer, ſaith: "We do "not at all define it to a buſineſs of "Words, nor an ability of Expreſſions: "And

Auſt. Epiſt. 105.

Hil. on Matth. 5.

Cypr. de orat. dom.

Baſil. de orat.

"And *Clemens Alexandrinus* gives a Rea- *Clem. Al. Strom. Lib. 7.*
"ſon for it. Becauſe (ſaith he) we can
"ſpeak diſtinctly unto God tho' with
"Silence, and can utter loud inward
"Cryes, where no Voice is heard. A
Learned Divine, who hath made a nar-
row and particular Search into the *Dr Falken.*
Writings of the Fathers about this mat-
ter, tells us, "That all the Ancient Wri-
"ters diſcourſe of Prayer, as a work of
"the Heart and Soul, and not of Words:
Whereas you diſcourſe of it as a Matter
of Words and an Ability of Expreſſions.
So that this Diſtinction was not known
in the days of theſe Fathers: No, nor in
many hundred years after. How then
did this Diſtinction come into the
World that hath made ſo much Noiſe,
and done ſo much Miſchief in it?

Come, I think, you have pointed un-
to the firſt Author of it, which (if I
miſtake not) is Biſhop *Wilkins*; Who,
in his Preface to the Gift of Prayer,
ſeems to own and acknowledge as
much: For in the beginning of the
Preface, he tells us, "That little or no-
"thing was ever written on this Subject
"before him, and ſeems to wonder that
"this excellent Art, ſhould be hid from
"all former Ages; and reſerv'd for his
diſ-

'diſcovery in the latter Days. In the next Page, he repeats it again, and ſaith; For ought he could find, there was little written of it in any Language. In the Cloſe of the Preface, he ſpeaks home, and makes himſelf plainly the firſt Author of it; for he tells us, he drew up the ſubſtance of his Book many years before he knew ſo much as any one Author, who had formerly attempted this Subject. So that, this is a mere Novelty by the Author's own Confeſſion: And yet you think he has infinitely oblig'd Mankind by preſenting the World with this ſingular Gift: But I think he had no ſuch high Thoughts of it himſelf in the latter and wiſer part of his Life: And would willingly have recall'd this Gift, when he ſaw what bad uſe was made of it. But I ſhall give you a more particular account of this, in a Letter by it ſelf: In the mean time let us proceed,

Secondly, To enquire what might be the Occaſion of this Diſtinction, between the Gift and Grace of Prayer?

And 'tis more than probable, that this proceeded, from an unhapy miſtaking a Readineſs of ſpeech for the Gift of Prayer. There is (indeed) in ſome

Men

Men a great Faculty and Readineſs of Speech, whereby they can expreſs themſelves with greater Fluency, and leſs Heſitation than others: And this, as all other Faculties of Body and Mind, may be ſtiled, the Gift of God; But that this is not the Gift of Prayer, I ſhall prove to you by this Argument.

The Gift of Prayer muſt be ſomething that is peculiar and appropriated to Prayer; (for elſe it may be the Gift of any other thing, as well as Prayer.)

But this Readineſs of Speech is not peculiarly appropriate unto Prayer: (For we know it may be and daily is applyed to many other Subjects and Occaſions; as the Lawyer diſcovers it in pleading; And men of Parts daily ſhew it in matters of common Converſe and Obſervation,) and Therefore,

The Readineſs of Speech you ſo much talk of, cannnot be the Gift of Prayer.

Beſides, if the Gift of Prayer ſhould lie in ſuch a Readineſs of Speech, what ſhall they do that want it? 'Tis moſt certain, that the far greateſt part of Chriſtians, have neither a Readineſs of Mind to conceive, nor a Readineſs of Tongue to expreſs for themſelves ſuch Prayers, as are fit to be offer'd up to

the

the Divine Majeſty; What then? Shall they not pray at all? Or can they pray without the Gift?

Why, ſay ſome, in Publick let them attend to the Miniſters Words, and Pray by his Gift; (that is) Let them be tyed up to his Words, which, tho' ſudden and unknown to them before-hand, muſt be a Form to them; and preferr'd too, before the Publick Deliberate Forms of Godly Men; yea, of the whole Churches compoſing.

And is not this an excellent way (think you) to preſerve Sober, Serious, and True Devotion, and to help Men to agree and ſpeak the ſame thing in the Publick Aſſemblies? But what ſhall they do in Private? Why, there you would have them Try, and Practiſe, and Learn this Art. Yes, And whilſt they are ſtudyiny and beating their Brains about Matter and Words; what will become of the Heart? How ſhall they watch that? Or excite thoſe inward Motions and Deſires that are fit to attend their Petitions? Since the Mind can't attend two ſuch different things at once. I fear (Sir) that ſome by trying to practiſe themſelves, and hearing it irreverently and rudely practiſed by others,

thers, have wholly laid aſide the Duty, and ſettled in a total Neglect and Careleſneſs about it.

Theſe are ſome of the many doleful Evils with which your Notion of the Gift of Prayer is unluckily clogg'd: All which are wiſely prevented, by placing the Gift or Grace of Prayer where it ſhould be, (*viz.*) in the Heart, and the Pious Motions and Affections of the Soul: And thence Perſwading Men, not ſo much to rely upon their own Abilities, as to make uſe of thoſe many Pious and Excellent helps both for Publick and Private Devotion, with which the Wiſdom and Piety of the Church of *England* hath ſo happily furniſhed them.

SIR,

I have ſent you this, to entertain and refeſh your Memory, before your Anſwer comes; which I ſhall earneſtly expect by the next. I am

SIR,

April 5. 1697. *Your humble Servant*,

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Find by your laſt, that 'tis as hard to pleaſe as 'tis to convince you: For though we ſtated the Queſtion laſt by your own Definition of the Gift of Prayer, and I thought to hear no more of that, yet now you are out of conceit with that too, and complain ſtill of the State of the Queſtion.

'Twas firſt put in new and varied words, which is the main (if not) only difference between Forms and Extempore Prayer; the former conſiſting in the conſtant uſe of the ſame Words, upon the ſame occaſion; The latter in the change and variety of them, where no occaſion requires it: But that would not do; thence we came from the Words, to the Ability of Expreſſions; and yet now that does not pleaſe neither, for you ſay this is a mere Logomachy, or, *Lis de Nomine*, a Diſpute about Words: and ſo it muſt neceſſarily be, whilſt you place the Gift in them: What's to be done

done then? You ſee this Notion of yours is a mere *Proteus* or Changling, that is ſtill varying and changing the Scene.

Why, you muſt try again, and ſee whether you can fix it upon ſomething that is more conſtant and laſting: For there is no Building without a Foundation, nor no Arguing without a true State of the Queſtion: If you would place it in the Heart, that would be a ſound and ſafe Bottom, and a ſtable Principle of Devotion; but whilſt you put it in the Tongue, which is ſo ſlippery a Member and daily given to many Windings and Turnings, you will never be able to fix it upon ſo unſound and uncertain a Bottom. You would have the Queſtion then ſtated thus, Whether an Ability of Expreſſions may not be called the Gift of Prayer; or, Whether the inward Deſires and good Motions of the Heart, do only deſerve that Name? With all my Heart; provided, you will take an Anſwer, and ſtand to it.

I ſay then, That an Ability of Expreſſions is very improperly call'd the Gift of Prayer, becauſe the whole buſineſs of Prayer may be done without it: And

that the pious Motions and Elevations of the Heart, do moſt properly and principally deſerve that Name; becauſe this is the very Eſſence of Prayer, which is required to all ſorts of Prayer, and none of them can be well perform'd without it. If you could but come to this, it would be a fair ſtep to a right Underſtanding in this Matter; for hereby you would ſee, that Words are no part of Prayer, and how abſurd it is to place the Gift of it, in that which does not appertain to it; and likewiſe, how impoſſible it is to perform the Duty without the Gift; which is nothing elſe but the Ability of performing it. Can any Speak without the Gift of Speaking; or Think or Write without the Gift of Thinking or Writing? How then ſhould it come to paſs, that a Man can Pray without the Gift of Praying?

Moreover, you might learn from hence, that God's beſtowing the Aſſiſtance of his Grace to kindle and excite Pious Diſpoſitions of Heart in ſeeking unto him, is moſt properly his vouchſafing the Gift of Prayer; and our Exerciſing or Exerting ſuch earneſt and affectionate Deſires, with a lively Faith

and

and inward Devotion, is our having or uſing the Gift of Prayer.

And really, Sir, you may as well diſtinguiſh between the Gift and Grace of Charity, as the Gift and Grace of Prayer; both which are the Gracious Gifts of God's Holy Spirit, the one enclining us to ſhew Mercy to our Neighbour, and the other to ask Mercy and Favour at the Hands of God. If you will conſider this well, and make it the Subject of your ſecond and beſt Thoughts, 'tis poſſible it may help to bring this matter to a good Iſſue.

In the mean time, I am glad I have in ſome meaſure cur'd the Malady of Excurſions; for I find the Number of them mightily abated; there being in your laſt Letter not above five or ſix that are very conſiderable, *viz.* about King *William*, the Aſſaſſination, the Jacobitiſh Inſurrections, French Invaſion, and their Preparations, *&c.* of which, becauſe I find you ſenſible, by asking Pardon for them, and deſiring me not to be too ſevere upon them, I am willing to paſs them by, hoping they may wholly wear off in time, though ſuch an Inveterate Habit cannot be cur'd preſently.

But the Misery is, the curing of one Evil, hath made you fall into another, and from Excursions, you are run into plain Contradictions. For there is no reconciling your last Letter with the first: In the first you told me that I made you put the Gift of Prayer, where neither you nor any body else ever put it, (*viz.*) in Words and Expressions: In your last, you place the Gift wholly and solely in them; so that as t'was once *Rich.* against *Baxter*, so 'tis now *I.* against *M.* But how does this appear?

Why, as clear as the Sun, both by the Arguments and Distinctions of your Last.

Your first Argument, is an Appeal to the common way of Speaking: For when 'tis said, that such an one hath a good Gift of Prayer, we mean not (say you) that he hath any pious Motions or good Affections, but that he aptly expresseth himself in that Duty: So that the apt Expressions are with you the Gift of Prayer. Whereas I say, that without those pious Motions and Affections, such a one hath a good Gift of Prating, as appears by pouring out so many Words; but he hath no good Gift of Praying; for

for that is the pouring out the Heart and Soul unto God.

But you ſay, 'tis Vulgarly ſtiled. I hope, Sir, you are not to be led by the Vulgar into their Errors and Miſtakes, but to lead them out of them: But I ſee your Notions are as Vulgar, as the Perſons you converſe with; and there is no raiſing you a Twirl above the Vulgar, where all your Intereſt lies.

Your next Argument is more Home for the Words than this; for therein you tell us, that the Words themſelves, whereby we expreſs our ſelves, may be, and are commonly term'd Prayer, which you prove thus,

Becauſe when a Man is ſaid to rehearſe the Lord's Prayer, or to read Common Prayer, the meaning is (ſay you) that he rehearſeth or reads the Words of thoſe Prayers, not that he hath any Pious Motions or Affections.

And can any thing more plainly follow from hence, than that the Words, whereby we expreſs our ſelves, are with you the Gift of Prayer? But pray (Sir) Is the bare rehearſing the words, praying? why then a Parret may pray; for that may be taught all, or moſt of

thoſe words: You did not then think of that, and therefore muſt think it over again.

But you have one Argument that quite contradicts and deſtroys all this again: And that is, to prove that a Man may have the Gift of Prayer, without the Gift of Speech, Utterance or Elocution; and ſo it can neither lie in the Words, nor in the Ability neither. The Argument runs thus: If there be a great many who have a Talent or Gift of expreſſing Deſires to God in a ſuitable manner in Praying, that have not the Gift of Elocution applicable to other occaſions, Then there is a difference between the Gift of Elocution and the Gift of Prayer. And who doubts it? Did I not tell you before, that 'twas your unhappineſs not to diſtinguiſh and diſcern between them? But the deſign of the Argument is to ſhew, That you can and do diſtinguiſh between them; and that, becauſe as you ſay, there are a great many who have a Talent or Gift of uttering their Deſires in a ſuitable manner unto God, that have no Gift of Elocution upon other occaſions: That is, there are many Men who can ſcarce ſpeak a word of Senſe between

Man

Man and Man, who yet can pour out abundance of wonderful and powerful Senſe unto God in Prayer: Now how ſhould this be? What, are they inſpir'd with Matter and Words in talking unto God, and left to their own natural Dulneſs in their converſing with Men? For the proof of this, you appeal to the Experience of many Chriſtians, whom you have heard and known.

I know not, Sir, what wonderful things you have heard of this kind; but I fear the great Senſe you ſpeak of, if Wiſe Men had the hearing of it, would be frequently found great Nonſenſe.

Paſs we then from your Arguments to your Diſtinctions: And here you ſhew as nice and diſtinguiſhing a Head as moſt Men; and for ſplitting of a Hair, I think 'tis hard for *Peter Lumbard*, or any Schoolman of them all, to go beyond you.

But let us ſee what your Diſtinctions are, to what end they ſerve, and where they moſt properly place or fix the Gift of Prayer.

Firſt then, you diſtinguiſh between a ſpecial Gift of Prayer, which by the Name ſhould be the beſt; and this you

place in the Heart and the good Motions of it; and here you are ſafe as in a Church or Caſtle; for that is all that is neceſſary and eſſential to Prayer: But beſides this, there is a common Gift, which lies in Words and Expreſſions; And this is your Gift of Prayer, though it may be done without it.

Again, you diſtinguiſh between the Internal Spiritual Gift of Prayer, in which conſiſts the Life and Spirit of it, and this you place in the Elevations of the Heart; and here you are right again, if you would but reſt there: But you muſt needs have an external verbal Gift made up of new Words and Phraſes to ſerve upon occaſion, and this again is your Gift of Prayer.

Furthermore, you diſtinguiſh between an acceptable way of Praying with reſpect to God, which is the right performance of this Duty; and this, you very well place in the inward Deſires and Elevations of the Heart: Now the other Member of this Diſtinction muſt be, an acceptable way of Praying with reſpect to Men; and this may lie in new and varied Words, which are moſt apt to tickle the itching Ears, and pleaſe the Fancies of vain Men: And This is your

Gift;

Gift; becauſe you ſay, Old Words are good for nothing, but to dull and deaden you Devotion.

Again, you diſtinguiſh between a Moral or Theological way of performing the Duty of Prayer; and This you place in the devout Affections of the Soul; And an artificial way of performing this Duty, and This you put in Apt Words and Expreſſions, though they are no part of it.

Laſtly, you diſtinguiſh between, a ſucceſsful way of Praying, the Gift whereof you own to lie in the good Motions and Diſpoſitions of the Soul; and an Unſucceſsful, or a way of Praying to no purpoſe: And This (being good for nothing) you may place it in Words, or the Ability of Expreſſions; or where elſe you pleaſe.

And now, Sir, be pleas'd to look back to the new Sating of the Queſtion in the beginning of this Letter, and tell me whether the Special, Spiritual, Internal, Devout and Succeſsful way of performing the Duty of Prayer, be not moſt properly, principally and deſervedly ſtiled the Gift of Prayer; and whether the common, external, artificial and

un-

unſucceſsful way of Praying, be not very improperly and abuſively called by that Name. I am,

SIR,

Your affectionate Friend

and Wellwiſher,

April 12. 1697.

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Hope by this time you begin to ſee what a vain, empty thing your own Arguments and Diſtinctions make of your Gift of Prayer; for whether you put it in Words, or in an Ability, or in a Variety of Expreſſions, 'tis a meer windy and flatulent Notion, apt indeed to puff up, but not to edify; and perhaps 'tis hard to find a greater Inſtance of Pride and Folly together, than to hear one venting his Talent of Words among the Ignorant deluded Vulgar, where his affected Tone, mingled with their affected Groans, renders it rather a Scene of Mockery than Devotion.

You know, Sir, *Verba dare* is to deceive, and that a great deal of Guile and Hypocriſy lies under the Pomp and flouriſh of Words: One would think, Sir, that when God ſaith, *my Son give me thy Heart*, he had plainly directed to the Gift he expects in Prayer; but inſtead of that you give him the Tongue, and

and offer up the Calves of the Lips, and with the Heathens think him delighted with the Gift of much Speaking: 'Tis too evident, Sir, by both your Letters, that you cannot yet diſcern between the Gift of Speech, and the Gift of Prayer; for you confound and take one for the other, without knowing it, as you may plainly ſee by this Argument.

The Ability of Expreſſions is nothing elſe but the Gift of Speech.

But your Gift of Prayer is an Ability of Expreſſions, and therefore your Gift of Prayer is nothing elſe but the Gift of Speech.

The Minor is your own, the Major is evident; becauſe Ability is the ſame with Gift, and Expreſſions the ſame with Speech, and conſequently they are both the ſame thing.

And yet you Labour hard to prove that ſome Men can, and do pray very fluently without this Gift of Speech, which being the ſame with your Ability of Expreſſions, is to prove that they may pray without your Gift of Praying, and likewiſe that they may ſpeak very fluently without the Gift of Speech: The Abſurdity whereof is groſs enough to be felt. Again,

I find you Arguing, That becauſe that extraordinary Gift of Praying, by Inſpiration, which was peculiar to the Apoſtles, and appropriated wholly to the Matter and Words of Prayer, is by St. *Chryſoſtom*, and others, called the Gift of Prayer; therefore your common and ordinary Gift of Speech, or Ability of Expreſſions, which is applicable to any other occaſion, muſt be ſtiled by that ſacred Name.

Thus are you Bewildred and Loſt as it were in a Miſt, or Cloud of Words, and led by an *Ignis fatuus* ſo far out of the way, that you ſcarce know where you are. But come,

I fear 'tis this word Gift that hath thus impos'd upon you, and done all this Miſchief, and therefore let us lay it aſide a while, and enquire into the Nature of Prayer, wherein that mainly conſiſts; and this perhaps may be the beſt way to lead you out of this Cloud, and to clear up the whole Matter.

Prayer then in its proper Notion, is the application of the Heart and Soul unto God, with a due ſenſe of the Divine Majeſty, and an humble Dependence upon him, for the ſupply of all our Wants.

This

This is the Nature and Eſſence of Prayer, which you ſee is no verbal thing, but a pious Addreſs of the Heart and Soul unto God. Here is nothing of Words nor Expreſſions that enters this Divine Compoſition, which may be as well, and ſometimes better done without them, than with them. But when,

I told you that God is not to be inform'd by any Words, nor to be perſwaded by many, nor pleas'd with new, you ask me, What then, muſt we pray without any Words? And in another place, Muſt we ſet down with the Quakers ſilence, and ſettle in Quietiſm? To which I anſwer, No:

For there are ſome times when we may pray either with or without Words, as when we are alone; and there are times likewiſe when words are neceſſary, as when we pray with others; both theſe have their proper Seaſons: When we are alone in our Cloſet, we may breath out our deſires unto God, either with or without Words, as we find moſt conducing to the inward Piety and Devotion of our Soul. And when we are in our Callings, we may frequently lift up our Hearts unto God, with or without Words, and mingle ſome ſhort

Ejacu-

lations with the Affairs and Buſineſs of this Life, which is that Praying continually and without Ceaſing, enjoyned by the Apoſtle, and is a way of Praying very acceptable and well pleaſing unto God. *1 Theſ. 5. 17.*

But when we pray with others in Publick or Private, Words are to be uſed not by way of Information; for God knows our Neceſſities before we ask; much leſs for Vanity or Oſtentation, but to help us to joyn in our Petitions, to agree in what we ask, and to glorifie our Maker with one Heart and one Mouth. *Rom. 15. 6.*

Now here the known compos'd Words of a Form, are far more conducing to this end, than the ſudden Conceptions and Expreſſions of free Prayer; for by the former, Men are acquainted before-hand what they are to ask of God, and ſo may come prepared with ſuitable Affections to joyn in it; in the latter, Men being uncertain what will be ask'd, or offered up, they muſt be uncertain too, whether they may ſafely joyn or ſay Amen to it.

Again, by Men's joyning together in Publick well compos'd Terms, Unity and Order may be preſerv'd, the Peace of

of the Church and the Decency and Harmony of publick Worſhip may be ſecured: For hereby, according to the A-
1 Cor. 1. 10. poſtles direction, they may be enabled to
Phil. 3. 16. Mind and Speak the ſame things; whereas by the Liberty of free Prayer, Men may vent what they pleaſe; they may, and often do pray one againſt another, and mingle their Paſſions and Errors with their Prayers, by which means Confuſion muſt neceſſarily break in, and Sects and Schiſms be unavoidably Multiplied and Increaſed.

Again, by the joyning together in publick eſtabliſh'd Forms, we ſhew that Duty and Reverence that is owing to our Superiours, to whom the care of the Church is committed; we pay that
Heb. 13. 17. Obedience, that is due to them that rule over us in the Lord, and manifeſt
Rom. 13. 1, 5. our Subjection; and that not only for Wrath or for fear of Puniſhment, but for Conſcience ſake, which things are frequently taught and inculcated in Holy Scripture; whereas by indulging this Gift of free Prayer, in oppoſition to publick Eſtabliſhments, Men throw off the Duty of Obedience to the lawful Com-
Jude 8. mands of their Superiours; They come to deſpiſe wholſome Laws, and to Speak evil

evil of Dignities; and this prepares them for Sedition and all manner of Diſobedience. Once more,

The joyning together in the ſame Prayers in publick Worſhip, is a good means to preſerve Love and Charity among Neighbours; for Mens Religion hath a great influence on their Manners and converſation with each other: They that go to the Houſe of God together as Friends, commonly continue ſo and maintain an Amicable and Friendly Correſpondence; whereas they that break into different parties and communions, ſoon become Strangers, and very often Enemies to one another. Different ways of Worſhip neceſſarily breed Differences among Men, and they that divide in Opinion generally do in Affection too; ſad Experience ſhews this both in Families, Towns, and Countries; and he that will conſider the hearty Love and Amity that was found in this Kingdom before the Civil Wars, when all Men reſorted to the ſame place and way of Worſhip, and compare it to that Hatred, Falſhood, Diviſion, and Contention that reigns in theſe preſent days, will eaſily ſee the Miſerable effects that have proceeded from your Gift of free Prayer,

which as it first caused our Divisions, so is still the main Tool to uphold and increase them.

Sir, These are serious and weighty Truths, and very well deserve your deep and impartial Consideration, which if you please to bestow upon them, I doubt not but you will see cause to believe that to bring ardent Desires and good Affections to the publick Prayers of the Church, whereby the inward Piety of the Heart towards God, the outward Duty of subjection to Superiours, and the mutual Offices of Love and Charity to our Neighbours are best promoted, is far to be prefer'd before the Gift of free Prayer, which being chiefly exercis'd about Words and Expressions, is apt to disturb the Devotion of the Mind, to give offence to our Governours, and to create Feuds and Animosities among Neighbours. Call to mind, Sir, the many affectionate Exhor-
1 Cor. 1. 10. tations to Unity and Order, with which the holy Scriptures do abound; how heartily our Saviour prayed for it, at
John 17. 20, 21, 22, 23. his leaving the World, That they all might be one; and how earnestly the
Eph. 4. 3, 4. &c. Apostle presses the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; and how sharply he

he rebuked all that cauſe and foment Diviſions; and conſider whether Joyning together in the ſame pious and publick Prayers appointed by the Church, be not a better means to preſerve this Unity and Order, than to leave Men to the freedom of venting and hearing what Prayers they pleaſe, which muſt neceſſarily diſtract their Minds, and lead them into great Confuſions and Diſorders. 1 Cor. 3. 3, 4, &c.

But I find two Objections in your Letters againſt publick Eſtabliſh'd Forms, and for the exerciſe of Free Prayer. The one is taken from the variety of emergent Accidents, and Occaſions of humane Life, which cannot be ſo well provided for by Forms, as by Free Prayer. The other is taken from the tendency of the conſtant uſe of Forms to flatten and dull the Devotion, which muſt therefore be quickened by the help of new and varied Prayers.

I ſhall ſhew both theſe to be popular Miſtakes, and bring on greater Miſchiefs than they pretend to remedy; and when that is done, I ſhall conſider what you offer from Biſhop *Hall* and Biſhop *Wilkins*. In the mean time I am, SIR,

Your hearty Friend and Well-wiſher

Apr. 15. 1697. M. H.

LETTER VIII.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Promiſed in my laſt, an Anſwer to two Popular Objections againſt Forms of Prayer, which I find you making uſe of, as Arguments for your Free Prayer. The firſt whereof is taken from the variety of emergent Accidents and Occaſions, which you ſay cannot be ſo well provided for by Forms as by Free Prayer.

Now I would not have you be too poſitive and confident in this matter, till you have well weigh'd theſe following Conſiderations, *viz.*

Firſt, The daily and ordinary matter of publick Prayer is ſtill the ſame; and therefore that may well be provided for, by ſtated and uſeful Forms. Now the daily and ordinary matter of publick Prayer are, Confeſſion of Sin, Petition for Pardon, with other Temporal and Spiritual Bleſſings: Thanksgiving for Mercies received, and Interceſſion for all Men, whether Friends or Foes: And more

more eſpecially for thoſe whom we are more particularly directed to pray for: All which may be, and are provided for by ſtanding preſcribed Forms; and thoſe ſo wiſely ordered and compoſed too, that as all Men may know and ſatisfie themſelves in them before-hand, ſo they may come prepared to joyn in them. (To inſtance in Particulars;) For Confeſſion of Sin, we have Two excellent Forms of it in the Publick Liturgy; the One, in the Daily, the other in the Communion Service of the Church: Where the general Aberrations of humane Life, in Thought, Word, and Deed, are ſo piouſly and pithily expreſs'd, that every true penitent Chriſtian, may and ought with one Heart and one Mouth to joyn in them.

But theſe you ſay, float too much in Generalities. But muſt not the publick Confeſſion be ſo General, that all Men may be able to make it? Would you have it deſcend to thoſe particular Sins which many are not guilty of, and ſo make them confeſs that to God, with which they cannot charge themſelves? There are many (no doubt) in every Congregation, that never committed Murder or Adultery, by taking away the Life

or Chaſtity of any Perſon; and would you have theſe and other Enormous Crimes put into the Publick Confeſſion, from which many are free, and ſo falſly accuſe themſelves before God? You know, that every one hath ſome particular Sins, to which their Conſtitution and Circumſtances of Life, may more ſtrongly incline them; Now theſe are to be the ſubject of Mens private and ſecret Confeſſions; but muſt not enter the publick Confeſſion of the Church, for that muſt be ſo framed as to reach all, that all may joyn in it. We are indeed to Pray againſt every particular Sin, which is excellently well done in the Litany; but we are to confeſs no more than we are guilty of. And how far the Confeſſions of your free Prayer are faulty this way, you will do well to conſider. Again, for Petition for Mercy and Pardon, with all other Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings, theſe too may be, and are excellently provided for by pious and preſcrib'd Forms. The common and ordinary wants of Chriſtians are conſtantly the ſame: We want daily, the Pardon of the Sins of every Day: We lack continually our Daily Bread: We ſtand in daily need of the Aids and Aſſiſtances of God's Holy

Holy Spirit, to ſtrengthen our Graces, and to fortifie us againſt Temptations: Now, Prayers for the ſupply of theſe and all other Common wants of Chriſtians, are very well taken care of in the Litany, Collects, and other Offices of the Church: If any Chriſtian hath particular wants of his own, that are not common to all Chriſtians, theſe are to be made the Requeſts of his ſecret and retired Devotion; for nothing is to be pray'd for in Publick, but what all Chriſtians may joyntly ask and agree in. If you call this too, A floating in Generalities; Know, That this is all that is neceſſary or expedient for publick Worſhip. Again, For Thankſgivings for Mercies received; theſe too may be and are well provided for by Publick Forms: The Common and Ordinary Mercies vouchſaf'd to Chriſtians, are ſtill the ſame; the ſame Mercies are renew'd upon us every day; and we daily partake of the ſame Inſtances of the Divine Bounty and Goodneſs: And theſe are excellently well compriz'd in the general Thankſgiving; where the common Mercies of Creation, Preſervation; and likewiſe the more ſpecial Bleſſings of our Redemption are acknowledg'd, together with the

means of Grace and hopes of Glory. And for other particular Mercies, that the whole Congregation may hear and joyn in, they are well provided for by Particular Collects. And if beſides theſe there be any more Particular Mercy and Deliverance, which any One hath a mind to preſerve the ſenſe and memory of, he may make it the Subject of his ſecret Praiſes and Thankſgivings. Then (Laſtly) for Interceſſions, theſe too may be, and are happily provided for in Publick Forms; in which, (according to the Apoſtle's Direction) [*Supplications and Prayers, Interceſſions and Giving of thanks are made for all Men; for Kings, and all that are in Authority*, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3.] and for others that we are bound to Pray for: So that, the daily and uſual Matter of Prayer being always the ſame, what need is there of your Talent of Variations in theſe Caſes? Is God (think you) delighted in new Phraſes and Expreſſions when there is no occaſion for them? Does any Earthly Parent deny his Bleſſing to his Child, becauſe he asks it in the ſame Words to day that he did yeſterday? Much leſs will our Heavenly Father, whoſe Compaſſions are

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infinitely more tender, deny our Daily Bread, or reject our Petitions, because they are offer'd up in the same Words. God is the same, [*Yesterday, to day, and for ever* ;] and our wants are the same to day, that they were yesterday, and will be so continually: And then, what need can there be of varying Expressions, when we address to him, with whom [*Is no variableness neither shadow of turning* Jam. 1. 17. ?]

2. But besides this daily and usual matter of Prayer, which is still the same, there may be (*2ly.*) some more rare and occasional matter of Prayer ; As, the want of Rain, or Fair Weather ; the Necessities of War, Famine, Sickness, and the like ; Now, if you will peruse the Liturgy, you will find all these admirably taken care of, by Particular Offices and Collects, suited to those Occasions: And likewise proper Thanksgivings for them, when our Prayers are answered: And being so, what need can there be of the various and changable Expressions of your Free Prayer? We find our Saviour (who could not want variety of Expressions,) Praying three times upon such an occasion, using still the same Words; and

that

that in his Agony too; when the Anguiſh and Bitterneſs of his Sufferings was ſufficient to inſpire him with many new Words, if there had been any need of them; and even in the heighth and horror of his Dereliction, he was ſo far from affecting new Words, that he made uſe of a ſhort Form taken out of the Pſalms, [*My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Pſal. 22. 1.]

So that all theſe Occaſional Emergencies being ſo well provided for, there can be no need of your Free Prayer in theſe Caſes neither. But beſides all theſe, there may be (Laſtly) Other extraordinary occaſions, As, Publick Faſts for national Sins and Calamities; And likewiſe Publick Thankſgivings for national Mercies and Deliverances; Now theſe too, are by the Wiſdom and Piety of the Church, conſtantly taken care of, by Publick and well digeſted Forms, ſuitable to ſuch Occaſions. So that, your frequent Queſtions [*What ſhall we do for Prayers to ſolemnize the King's Deliverance from Aſſaſſinations? French Invaſions? Jacobite Inſurrections? &c.*] are all idle and frivolous: For all theſe things, as far as Authority thinks fit to take notice of them, are abundant-

abundantly taken care of, by ſuitable and Publick Forms. And if you know any (as you ſay) that turn Faſts into Feſtivals; or Feſtivals into Humiliations; you will do well, to bring them to condign Puniſhment; and not charge the Faults of private Perſons, upon the Publick Prayers. But you ask [*What? muſt we ſtay till Arch-Biſhop* Sancroft, *and Biſhop* Kenn, *ſhall ſend us Prayers upon ſuch Occaſions?*] Yes (Sir) I think it becomes you to ſtay for the Orders and Directions of your Superiours, in ſuch Caſes; for elſe, you may go too faſt; and miſtake a Deliverance for a Defeat; And ſo, inſtead of a Sober, well ordered Devotion, you may offer up *the Sacrifice of Fools*: Your over-haſty Zeal, may prove a falſe Fire, and lead you out of the way. And therefore if you are big of your own Conceptions, you were beſt ſtay out the due time to be delivered of them, for fear of a Miſcarriage.

But, muſt you not have a fine conceit of your ſelf all this while, to think, you can better perform the Work of ſuch Solemn Seaſons, by the preſent Conceptions of your own Brain; than by the grave and deliberate compoſures of the whole Church? The

The ſum of all then is this: The daily and conſtant Matter of Prayer, is ſtill the ſame: And other Occaſional and Extraordinay Emergencies, may be and are very well provided for, by well-compos'd Forms; for *Solomon* tells us, [*There is nothing new under the Sun.*] But if any ſuch new and unheard of Occurrence ſhould happen, that Authority neither hath, nor can well make proviſion for; there is none will blame you, if you either compoſe a Form, or uſe your free Prayer upon ſuch an occaſion: Provided it be done with modeſty, and due reſpect to the Authority of your Superiours. So that, theſe things well conſidered; neither is the Caſe of Publick Forms weakened, nor the neceſſity of Free Prayer confirm'd, by your frequent Talk of Providential Events and Occurrences.

Your other Objection ſhall be anſwered in my next; in the mean time I am,

SIR,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

April 9. 1697.

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Come now, according to Promiſe, to conſider the ſecond Objection againſt Forms, which you likewiſe make uſe of as an Argument for free Prayer; And that is taken from the tendency of Forms to cloy and dull your Devotion; and the aptneſs of free Prayer to quicken and enliven the ſame. A great Fault indeed in the One, and a great Convenience in the Other, if both be true; but I think we ſhall find upon examination, that neither is.

Firſt then you ſay, Publick Forms are apt to deaden and dull your Devotion: But why ſo? Why for two Reaſons, *viz.* (1.) Becauſe they are conſtantly the ſame old Words; and likewiſe (2*ly*.) Becauſe they are red out of a Book too. Now if theſe be good Reaſons, you muſt be as dull as a Beetle in reading the Holy Scriptures, and ſtark dead at the Lord's Prayer; for theſe are always the ſame Words and read out of a Book too:

too: And he that can find no Life or Spirit in reading of theſe, cannot be edifyed by any Prayer. Our Saviour exhorted to the frequent reading of the Scrip-
1 Tim. 4. 13. tures; and the Apoſtle, to give attendance to reading: Which was done by the Primitive Chriſtians with that Intention and Fervency, that (as *Origen* tells us) The devout Reader ſeem'd to be in a manner inſpir'd. But you are dull'd (it ſeems) with reading old things, and nothing can pleaſe you, but what is new, and ſpeaking without Book. Might not this (Sir) be the occaſion of ſetting up new Lights above the Scriptures, to pleaſe ſuch new-fangled Humours, and enlighten ſuch dull Underſtandings? Yea, hath not this occaſion'd the laying aſide the Lord's Prayer and the Apoſtles Creed, becauſe they are ſtill the ſame old Words, and read out of a Book too? But tell me (Sir) did Chriſt preſcribe a Form of Prayer to deaden or help the Devotion of his Followers? Or did the Holy Ghoſt deſtroy all the Life and Vigour of it, by putting it into Writing, that it might be read and uſed by Chriſtians in all Ages? If this were true, Oral Tradition would be a greater help to

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Devotion than the Oracles of God; for theſe are old written Truths, and the other, the various and changeable Inventions of Men. Does not the Apoſtle bid us [*To hold faſt the Form of ſound words*] which we can neither hold faſt, nor keep ſound long, if it be ſubject to daily Variations? Muſt we be always Children, to be pleas'd only with New Things, and (like them) to be [*carried about with every wind of Doctrin?*] Or, muſt we not *in Underſtanding be Men*, by ſtanding firm to the Ancient Faith, and keeping cloſe to the receiv'd and well-order'd Models of Devotion? But why (Sir) ſhould grave and well-order'd Words in Prayer, put ſuch a Damp upon your Spirits, and dull your Devotion? One would think, that few and well-weigh'd Expreſſions ſhould better tend to make Men ſoberly and religiouſly Devout, than pouring out many new, raw, and indigeſted ones; and that the Heart ſhould be more at leiſure to attend the great buſineſs of Prayer, when Matter and Words are well prepared for it, than when 'tis called off and hindred by the Study and Invention of both. A Wiſe Man would think it a great quickening of Devotion, to con-

2 Tim. 1. 13.

Epheſ. 4. 14.

1 Cor. 14. 20.

ſider,

ſider, that he is joyning with the whole Church at the ſame time, and in the ſame Prayers; and would thereby be encourag'd with greater hopes of ſucceſs, from the harmony and agreement of our Petitions, which our Saviour hath made neceſſary and effectual to that end. Mat. 18. But I fear (Sir) the dulneſs you ſpeak of, will be found more the Fault of the Perſons than the Prayers: For 'tis not poſſible that the well-order'd Matter and Words of a pious Form, ſhould ſo diſorder the Spirits, and dull your Affections, if there were not ſomething elſe in the matter. Have you not (Sir) ſome other Game to play upon the People, which is better carried on by new Words than old? Then 'tis no wonder that that is accounted dull which does not move forward, and advance the Deſign. Have you not entertain'd ſome Prejudices your ſelf, or infus'd Prejudices into others againſt Forms; (As) That they cannot provide for all Emergencies; and that the conſtant Uſe and Repetition of them is apt to cloy and ſurfeit; and ſo have put People out of Love with plain wholſome Food, by treating them with Kickſhaws and Varieties? 'Tis ten to one but there is ſome-

ſomething of this in the matter. Your unjuſt Cenſures, Outcries, and Declamations againſt pious and publick Forms, hath cauſed many to neglect the publick Worſhip; and made others careleſs and irreverent in it: And if ſo, you muſt anſwer for your own and others dulneſs, which you have unhappily occaſioned.

Secondly, You ſay, That old and frequently repeated Forms, are not more apt to dull than new and varied Prayers are to quicken and enliven you; for you find a different Heat and Flame in ſuch Prayers. But pray (Sir) what kind of Heat is that you feel in ſuch Prayers? Is it not rather the Warmth and Heat of Fancy, than any real Fervency of Spirit? This is a frequent and dangerous Miſtake, and hath impos'd upon many; who have taken ſome falſe Heats for true Zeal, and the deluſions of the Imagination, for the true Devotion of the Heart. But becauſe this is not eaſily diſcern'd or underſtood by vulgar Minds, I will endeavour as clearly as I can to diſcover the Deluſion. To this end we may obſerve, That as in the Body there is a Natural Heat reſiding in the Heart, which conveys warm Blood and Spirits to all the Members, and in this the

Health and ſound Conſtitution of the Body mainly conſiſts; ſo there are ſometimes the preternatural Heats of Fevers, and other Diſtempers, which too much inflame the Blood, and put the Spirits into a violent and diſorderly motion; and this is an evil habit and indiſpoſition of the Body: Juſt ſo likewiſe it is with the Soul; there is a pious fervency of Spirit which reſides in the Heart, and fills it with ſtrong deſires after God, and an inward delight in him; and in this conſiſts ſound and true Devotion: But beſides this, there are Feveriſh Heats of Fancy and Enthuſiaſm, which inflame and diſorder the Spirits; and, in Men of hot Brains and ſtrong Imaginations, raiſe them to ſome degree of Extaſie and ſpiritual Frenzy: This is a Diſeaſe of the Mind, and is very far from the Temper of True Devotion. And the want of knowing and diſtinguiſhing between theſe, hath led Men into many Miſtakes about the Duty of Prayer, and other parts of Religion; for, finding themſelves ſomewhat warm and earneſt at a Religious Exerciſe, they preſently conclude themſelves fir'd with true Zeal and Piety towards God; when all the while it proves no better than

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falſe Fire; and a plain miſtake of the heat of Fancy, for the Fervors of true Devotion.

But how may we diſcern the one from the other? Why chiefly by obſerving theſe three things, (*viz.*) (1) What is it that creates this Warmth? (2) How long does it continue? (3) And what Fruits does it produce?

Firſt then, Let me ask you, what is it that heats you in ſuch Prayer? Is it the Matter, or only the newneſs and variety of the Phraſes and Expreſſions in which 'tis delivered? If it be the ſoundneſs of the Matter that thus affects you, then the ſame Matter delivered in a well-compoſed Form, would have the ſame effect; and this would ſhew it a ſincere Fit of Devotion: But if it be only a new conceived Prayer that does this Feat, then 'tis plain, that 'tis not the Matter, but the mere Novelty of the words that thus tickles and warms you: Such ſudden Tranſports are occaſion'd only by new and ſurpriſing words, which ſtriking briskly upon the Fancy, are apt to move and enliven it: But this does not go deep enough to reach or warm the Heart; but are only the Fallacies and falſe Heats of Imagination.

Again (Secondly) let me ask you, How long doth the Warmth you feel at ſuch Prayers, continue? Does it abide with you, and keep up a conſtant heat of Love and Deſire towards God? Is it like the Veſtal Flame that never goes out? Or is it only like the Fit of an Ague, that comes and goes again, and where the Hot Fit is ſoon follow'd with a Cold one? If it be only ſo, be not deceived, this is not the inward Flame or Heat of a devout Heart, for that is permanent and laſting; but either a Feveriſh Fit of Hypocriſie, or a Deluſion of Imagination. True Zeal is Uniform and Conſtant, and though it may admit of ſome Intermiſſions, yet (like the Natural Heat of the Heart) 'twill abide as long as Life continues; but if it grows cold again, and wears off, this pretended Warmth is no other than the tranſient and preternatural Heats of Fancy.

Thirdly and laſtly, Let me ask you, What Fruits does this Warmth you ſpeak of, produce? Does it enkindle and cheriſh in your Breaſt, the Love of God and your Neighbour? If ſo, 'tis a good ſign of a kindly heat and ſpiritual Life in the Soul: But if (as it too often happens) it enkindles the Flames of Wrath

Wrath and Contention; If it leads you into ways of Diviſion and Separation, by which you become Undutiful to your Superiours, Proud, Cenſorious, and void of Charity to your Equals: This Heat is but an *Ignis fatuus* that hath led you out of the way of Truth and Peace: Such a Zeal is no better than Wild-fire, and hath more than once ſet whole Kingdoms in a Combuſtion. In a word, if this be the beſt Fruit that grows upon this Stock, 'tis evident it ſprings from a rotten and corrupt Tree: All this pretended Warmth that ariſeth from the Novelty and Change of Words, is only the gratification and amuſement of Fancy, and not the Fervours of true Devotion. So that what our Saviour ſaid of Falſe Prophets, may be ſaid of falſe Lights, [*By their fruits you ſhall know them.*] The ſum is, This deadneſs and dulneſs Men complain of, is not in the Prayers, (which are admirably fitted to enkindle and excite holy Deſires and Affections, but in their own Prejudices, which lie as a Clog on the Soul, and hinder both its fervency and flight unto Heaven: And therefore theſe muſt be removed, that they may the better lift up their Hearts unto God. And if they

will be perſwaded to mend themſelves, they will ſee little reaſon to mend the Prayers; but rather great Cauſe to bleſs God, that the Church whereof they are Members, hath provided for them ſuch a pious and excellent Model of Devotion.

There is one thing more to be conſidered, which I find frequently mentioned in your Letters, (where though things lie ſcattered up and down without Order or Method, yet I ſhall endeavour to bring them all into their right places, and ſo leave nothing material unanſwered) and that is, The impoſing of Publick Forms is a great Grievance, and the not leaving Men to the Liberty of Free Prayer, that have a Talent that way: Which ſhall be conſider'd in the next. I am

SIR,

Your affectionate Friend

and Wellwiſher,

April 26. 1697.

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER X.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Find by your Papers, that you can ſometimes ſpeak as meanly of New and Varied Expreſſions in Prayer, as one would wiſh; and yet at other times can cry them up as the only Lively and Spiritual way of Praying. And tho' ſometimes your Objections againſt Publick Forms are ſo fierce and terrible, that one would think you utterly condemn them to be thrown out of the Church; yet in a milder mood you can ſpeak more favourably, and allow them to be pretty harmleſs, if not uſeful things: Theſe are ſome of your many and uſual Inconſiſtencies.

But what is it that thus unſettles you, and makes your Pleas as various as your Prayers? Why, 'Tis the Injunction of Forms that ſticks in your Stomach and can't down with you. You would have them left Free, and not impos'd upon thoſe who you think have no need of them. And here you magnify your

own and ſome others Talent this way; and complain moſt bitterly of Silencing ſo many Brave Men, that could not comply with the Publick uſe of them. You call them only helps of Impotence and Inſufficiency; and compare them to Spectacles for bad Eyes, and Crutches for lame Legs, *&c.*

Now to ſet theſe things right, let us conſider (1.) what Authority our Superiours have to command in theſe matters, and who gave them this Authority? And (2*ly.*) Let us ſee, what Obligations lie upon Subjects to obey and obſerve them? And then we ſhall the better ſee, what force your fine Similies and frivolous Objections have againſt them.

Firſt then let us ſee, what Authority our Superiours have to command in theſe Matters? To clear this we muſt note, that Governours being God's Miniſters, are ſet up by him; and inveſted with his Authority; which muſt therefore extend to all Lawful things, and whatſoever is not forbidden or countermanded by God himſelf. Now Forms of Prayer, are ſo far from being forbidden, that we find them recommended and preſcribed too by Divine Authority; and

and are by your ſelf reckon'd in the number of Lawful things; and conſequently, lie within the Bounds and Limits of their Authority; and our Superiours do not go beyond their Commiſſion, in commanding them. You know the Apoſtle requires, that [*All things* (in the Worſhip of God) *ſhould be done decently and in Order*, 1 Cor. 14. 40.] to avoid Confuſion and prevent Sects and Schiſms from breaking into the Church: And if ſo, then ſome body muſt have the ordering of them; for Order can't be kept up by Chance; neither will the Vulgar of themſelves, obſerve that decency that becomes the Service of God. Who then ſhould have the ordering of theſe things, but our Governours, to whom the care of the Church is committed? Again, the ſame Apoſtle wills, that [*All things be done to Edification*, 1 Cor. 14. 26.] which is an Alluſion to Building; in which (you know) there muſt be ſome chief Architect or Maſter-builder to contrive and give directions; and theſe are to be obſerv'd by the Inferiour Workmen, who are to work by order, Line, and Rule; without which their Work will be rather a confuſed Heap, than a Regular Struc-

ture.

ſture. In like manner, in the Church, which is the Houſe of God, there muſt be ſome to preſide and give Orders, and others to obey and be ſubject to their Authority; without which, all will be out of Frame; and things will be done to Deſtruction, and not to Edification. Now, if Publick Forms be moſt conducing to this Decency and Order; if they beſt preſerve the Unity, Harmony, and Reverence of Divine Worſhip; they muſt be reckon'd, not only in the number of things Lawful, but Expedient too; and ſo muſt fall under the Cognizance and Authority of our Governours. This Argument, if put in Form, will run thus.

Lawful things may be enjoyned by Superiours,

But Forms of Prayer are Lawful things: *Ergo.*

To which if we add their conſonancy to all Antiquity, and Expediency to preſerve an Uniform and Regular way of Publick Worſhip, 'twill give the greater force to it. So that Governours (you ſee) have good Authority for what they do in theſe matters.

2. In the next place then, what Obligation is there upon Subjects to obey

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or obſerve them? Why, a very ſtrong one too, if you will believe Chriſt and his Apoſtles; for they will and command, [*Every Soul to be Subject to the higher Powers, as ordain'd of God*, Rom. 13. 1.] *To obey them that have the Rule over them in the Lord*, Heb. 13. 17.] and [*To ſubmit to every ordinance of Man for the Lord's ſake*, 1 Pet. 2. 13.] Where all the Lawful Commands of our Superiours are ty'd upon us by virtue of God's Authority, which is derived upon them, and therefore we are required to be ſubject (not only [*for Wrath*] or fear of Puniſhment, which is a looſe Principle of Obedience, and will be caſt off by too many, when they can eſcape unpuniſhed; but) for [*Conſcience ſake*] which is a firmer Bond, and will keep good Men to their Duty, even when the Penalty is ſuſpended. So that Superiours (you ſee) have full Authority from God to Command; and Subjects have a ſtrict Obligation laid upon them to Obey in ſuch Matters. The Argument in Form will be thus:

All lawful Injunctions of our Governours are to be obey'd; But the Injunction of Publick Forms is a lawful Injunction, and therefore ought to be obey'd.

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However, Let Forms of Prayer be never ſo lawful and expedient too, and the Authority that Commands them never ſo juſt, yet you would not have them enjoyned, but left free for Men to uſe them, or not to uſe them, as they think convenient.

And will not this (think you) unavoidably create Schiſms, and bring in mere Confuſion into the Church? Are not the Vulgar generally caught, either by the multitude, or novelty, or variety of Words, and merely led by the Phantaſms of Imagination? Do not ſome look out for the ſtrongeſt Lungs, and the loudeſt Voice; and he paſſeth with them for the moſt powerful Man? Do not others ſeek for the nimbleſt Tongue, and readieſt of Speech; and he goes with them for a ſpiritual and inſpired Perſon? And are there not others which hunt about for the beſt Tone and the ſweeteſt Voice; and this is their precious and heavenly Man? What think you? Will not this ſend the generality of People a gadding (or madding rather) after their own and others Inventions? Will not Falſe Teachers ariſe, who for by and ſecular Ends will feed the Vulgar with their beloved Varieties,

and

and claw their Itching Ears with pleaſing Novelties? Will not the People go a Pilgrimage to find out the moſt Gifted Brother, and leave him too as ſoon as they hear of another appearing upon the Stage? Are you ſo fond (Sir) of Confuſion, as to have ſuch a wide Door open'd for it? And would you have your Superiours ſo little regard the Precepts that concern Order, Peace, and Unity, as to leave things to this paſs?

But the enjoining of Forms (ſay you) hath been the occaſion of all our Troubles; and 'tis this that created, and continues our Diviſions.

Pray (Sir) whoſe fault is that? Muſt not the Magiſtrate do his Duty to preſerve Order, becauſe ſome are ſo refractory and diſobedient, as to neglect theirs? Muſt there be no Government, becauſe ſome Turbulent Factious Spirits are too much inclin'd to diſturb it? No (Sir) 'twas not the Magiſtrates lawful exerciſe of his Power, but your perverſeneſs in with-holding due Reverence and Obedience to it, that is the Cauſe of all our Troubles; 'Twas not the enjoyning, but the removing of Forms, that was the In-let of all our Diviſions: For when the Liturgy was aboliſhed, your Free

Prayer

Prayer gave all Men a liberty of venting what they pleas'd; by which means Sects and Schiſms preſently began to increaſe and multiply, and a wide Gap was open'd for Atheiſm, Blaſphemy and Confuſion, and every evil Work to enter in. So that the heavy Reckoning you ſpeak of, will be put upon your Score, for reſiſting that Authority which you ought to have obey'd; and inſtead of preſerving Unity and Peace, fomenting and propagating Diviſions.

But *Scotland* (ſay you) is a United Country without a Liturgy.

(Sir) You may abuſe ignorant and deluded People with ſuch Stories, but its ſhameleſs to utter ſuch Untruths to thoſe that know and lament the doleful Miſeries and Diſtractions of that unhappy Kingdom. If you had ſaid, The riſe and beginning of all our Troubles had been from *Scotland*, and ſtill is a great occaſion of continuing them, you had ſpoke a great and a ſad Truth: For the great Rebellion that hath done us this miſchief, began there; and the Flames of the Civil Wars that ſhed ſo much Royal and Noble, as well as Common Blood, were firſt kindled by ſome hot and fiery Spirits in that Kingdom, which

after

after ſpread and put both Kingdoms into a Combuſtion. But, if Matters be ſo much changed for the beſt, and *Scotland* is become (like *Jeruſalem*) a place, at Unity within its ſelf, and thereby the Praiſe of the whole Earth, you would do well to remove into that bleſſed Countrey, where there is no Liturgy to dull your Devotion, but Free Prayer enough to ſerve for all Emergencies; and nothing but the Voice of Joy, Peace, and Unity, can ſound in your Ears.

But you would have me Petition our Governours for removing the Occaſions of our Diviſions, which you ſay are Declarations and Subſcriptions, that you may continue here with much more comfort.

(Sir) I have learnt more Manners than to direct and preſcribe to my Governours, who have a further proſpect and deeper Inſight into theſe matters, than 'tis fit for me to pretend to. But its a piece of your wonted Modeſty to ſet up your vain Opinion above the Wiſdom and Authority of your Superiours: And you are reſolv'd to be out of humour, if they order matters otherwiſe than you would have them. If you would but root out this piece of ſpiritual Pride,

and

and learn ſo much Humility as to ſuſpect your own Judgment (which God knows, and any Wiſe Man may ſee, is weak enough) you would ſoon find, there were no need or occaſion for ſuch a Petition.

But you have one Fetch more againſt enjoining of Forms, that muſt not be paſt by, and that is this, (*viz.*) The Magiſtrate thinks theſe things to be but indifferent, whereas many of us judge them to be Unlawful: And therefore we are to be born with, and his Judgment to be laid aſide: An excellent way indeed, to ſet up your ſelves above your Superiours, and to obey only what you pleaſe; for 'tis but for you to ſay or think any thing they Command to be Unlawful, and then you have an Excuſe or Diſpenſation from all Obedience to it. Is not this an eaſier way than that of *Corban*, to evacuate the Law, and make void the Commandments both of God and Man? But how come any among you to judge Forms of Prayer Unlawful, which have ever been uſed in the Church from the beginning of Chriſtianity to this Day? If you have led any into this Miſtake, your Duty is to undeceive them, and lead them out

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of it; and not to desire that such weak, or rather wilful persons, should be humoured in such Fooleries. As for things plainly forbidden by the Law of God, I hope we may so far trust to the Care and Integrity of our Governours, as not to fear the enjoining of them; Or if they should, you have a good Dispensation from obeying them. But for Matters judged to be good and profitable to the Publick (as the use of Forms, against which some may have a few Scruples and Prejudices) here (I hope) the Wisdom and Authority of Government may turn the Scale; and the certain Duty of Obedience, ought to weigh down an uncertain Scruple.

Sir, I have no time or room left to consider your fine Similies (of the Spectacles and Crutches) at present, but you shall not fail of it in my next. I am,

SIR,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

April 29. 1697. M. H.

LETTER XI.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Obſerv'd in my laſt, that tho' you can pretty well digeſt Forms of Prayer, yet 'tis the Injunction of them that ſticks in your Stomach: But I hope what I farther obſerv'd concerning the Juſt Authority of Superiours to command, and the neceſſary Duty of Subjects to obey, in a matter ſo lawful and expedient too, may help to make it go down a little better. However, againſt the Impoſing of them, you go on to tell me, that Forms of Prayer were at firſt brought in and intended only as Helps of Impotence and Inſufficiency; and to confine Men ſtill to them, is to neceſſitate them to a continual Impotence. You own them to be excellent and uſeful Things in the Times of Ignorance and Darkneſs; but now there is ſuch a Meridiam Light that ſhines about us, there can be no other uſe of them, than to ſend us back again, or keep us in the former Darkneſs; for Chriſt and his

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Apoſtles (ſay you) never enjoyned theſe things; and to Impoſe them now under the Goſpel, is no better, than to force Spectacles upon good Eyes, and Crutches upon able Legs.

Now, to ſet theſe things in their true Light, I ſhall readily grant you (1.) that Forms of Prayer are Helps of Impotence and Inſufficiency; but they are ſuch Helps as have been neceſſary, ever ſince the days of Inſpiration, and will be ſo to the end of the World: For, there is a natural Impotence in all Men, as to the Great Duties of Religion; and more eſpecially to this of Prayer: And therefore all poſſible Helps are to be uſed, to aid and aſſiſt us in the due performance of it. Under the old Teſtament, God Almighty appointed many Forms of Prayer, Praiſes, and Bleſſing the People; and the Jewiſh Service conſiſted of theſe, together with the Pſalms of *David*, and other Occaſional Prayers, compoſed by their Learned Doctors: And theſe were the Helps for their Impotence under the Legal Diſpenſation. Under the Goſpel, we find Forms of Prayers compos'd and preſcrib'd to help the Impotence of Chriſtians, under that Diſpenſation. St. *John* the

Baptiſt, the firſt Goſpel Preacher, taught his Diſciples to Pray, Luk. 11. 1, 2. which could not be Praying by the Spirit; for none but the Holy Ghoſt could teach that; but he compoſed and taught them a Form of Prayer. After which, the Diſciples of Chriſt came to him, and beg'd him [*to teach them to Pray, as* John *taught his Diſciples*; and he inſtantly gave them a Form of Prayer, and this was done, to help the Impotence and Inſufficiency of both; for we find the Apoſtles acknowledging, that they knew not what to Pray for as they ought; and that they were not ſufficient of themſelves to think a good thought. And becauſe the whole Oeconomy of the Jewiſh Worſhip was then to be aboliſhed, and a more Spiritual and Chriſtian way of Worſhip to be ſet up in its room, there was granted to them for a while an extraordinary Gift of Praying by Inſpiration, for the ſetling and propagating of it: And when that was done, this extraordinary Gift ceaſed, and Publick Prayers were compos'd according to it: And this hath continued in the Chriſtian Church ever ſince. So that, as Neceſſity at firſt brought in Forms of Prayer to help Mens natural Impotence and

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Inſufficiency for this Duty; ſo there now is, and ever will be, the ſame neceſſity to continue them.

(2.) But (Secondly) 'Tis a Miſtake (Sir) to affirm that they were brought in, and intended only for Helps of Inſufficiency; for there were other wiſe and great Ends in it, (namely) when Chriſtianity multipyed, to preſerve Order and Unity; and to prevent Schiſms and Diviſions in the Church: And likewiſe, that all Men may be acquainted with what they offer up unto God in Publick Worſhip; without which, they cannot agree in their Petitions, nor Pray, as we are bid, with one Heart and one Conſent.

But Chriſt and his Apoſtles (ſay you) never enjoyned Forms of Prayer. I would not have you (Sir) be too poſitive in that: For when Chriſt taught his Diſciples to Pray, he did it in theſe Words [*When you Pray, ſay, Our Father*; &c.] which is a plain Command to uſe theſe Words or this Form: And 'tis to think unbecomingly of the Apoſtles, that when our Saviour taught them what to ſay, they ſhould be ſo little obſervant and dutiful to their Maſter, as to neglect the Form he taught them, and to

prefer their Own Words before His; eſpecially, when thy were ſo ſenſible of their own Inability to Pray aright: So that, by your leave (Sir) I believe that Chriſt did take Liberty to Enjoyn a Form of Prayer; and that the Apoſtles and Chriſtian Church, underſtood him ſo, by the conſtant uſe of that Form ever ſince. But, tho' Chriſt might well enough do this, how does it appear (ſay you) that ever the Apoſtles aſſumed any Power of enjoyning theſe things? 'Tis certain (Sir) they aſſumed ſome power of enjoyning; as appears, by their Injunction, of [*Abſtaining from things offered to Idols, and from Blood, and from things ſtrangled*, Acts 15. 20.] And I think, both they and the Chriſtian Church, had and ſtill have as much Power, to enjoyn a ſet Form of Prayer as any of thoſe things: Yea, 'tis more than probable, that the Apoſtles did exerciſe a Power even in this thing; for we find them frequently requiring Chriſtians to keep cloſe to the [*Form of ſound Words*, 2 Tim. 1. 13.] Which for ought you know, might among other things, comprehend the Lord's Prayer; which having learnt of Chriſt themſelves, they were willing to have it learnt and kept

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to, by all Chriſtians. Does not St. *Paul* will the *Corinthians* [*To mind and ſpeak the ſame things*, 1 Cor. 1. 10.] in the Worſhip of God? And how could that be, without ſome Form of Publick Worſhip to joyn and agree in? Again, does not he command the *Philippians* [*To walk by the ſame Rule*, Phil. 3. 16.] Which no doubt, was ſet, and preſcribed; for elſe, they could not tell how to walk by it. Theſe things we often find them preſſing, and enjoyning too upon the Conſciences of Men; which was all they could do at that time, when the Secular Power was againſt them; But aſſoon as the Emperours became Chriſtians, their Succeſſors call'd in the Aid of the Temporal Power, to ratify and enforce them.

But Forms of Prayer (ſay you) may be of excellent uſe and fit to be enjoyned too, in Times of Ignorance and Darkneſs, when Men can neither know, nor do better: And ſuch (you ſay) was the Time when our Liturgy was compos'd; but now the Meridian Light of the Goſpel ſhines out ſo bright upon us, there can be no ſuch need or uſe of them.

I fear (Sir) this Meridian Light of yours, if well look'd into, will prove

no better than Cimmerian Darkneſs. You are not the firſt that have taken [*Darkneſs for Light,*] the Church of *Laodicea* thought themſelves rich and abounding in Knowledg, when all the while [*they were poor and miſerable, blind and naked.*] And I find you (who no doubt think your ſelf encompaſs'd with Rays) ſomewhat in the dark, as to the Nature and Gift of Prayer; by placing that in the Ability of Expreſſions, which ſhould be put in the inward Deſires and Devotion of the Heart. But (Thanks be to God) you are pretty well coming out of it; for you own it improperly plac'd in the former; and there is ſome hope you may in time find out the proper place of it, and put it in the latter. But may not this be reckon'd another Inſtance of your Vanity and Self-conceit, to think that you, who caſt off Forms of Prayer, are in the higheſt Form of Chriſtians; and (like the *Iſraelites* in the Land of *Goſhen*) ſurrounded with a Glorious and Meridian Light? While others that uſe them, are in a lower rank, and (like the *Egyptians*) wrapt in black and thick Darkneſs?

You will never do well (Sir) till you ſubdue this Pride, and learn to ſpeak

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and think more humbly and modeſtly of your ſelves.

But you have two fine Similies, which I find you very much inſiſting and relying upon, (though they are at beſt, but the feeble Supports of decay'd Nature, and I fear, will prove but the weak Props of a ſinking Cauſe) and they are *Spectacles* and *Crutches*. Concerning which give me leave to preſent you with a wiſe Obſervation of a Great Man, *viz.* "That "there is nothing more poor in Learn-"ing, than a fine and handſome Simili-"tude, when it hath no Truth to reſt "upon; for the beſt that can be ſaid of "it, is, That it's a pretty fine thing if "it were to the purpoſe. However, let us ſee what uſe you make of them.

Firſt then you ask, What need have they to uſe Spectacles, that have good Eyes of their own? (that is) in plain terms, What need have they to uſe Forms, that can do well enough without them? But pray Sir, had not the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians as good Eyes in their Heads as moſt Men? and yet they had thoſe Spectacles appointed for them, and uſed them too: For when Chriſt taught them to Pray, he gave them a Form, *Luke* 11. 2. And can you think

think them ſo unthankful as to lay it aſide, and ſay, they could ſee well enough without ſuch Spectacles? Sure, the Apoſtles who had their natural Sight aſſiſted and elevated by the Light of Divine Revelation, could ſee as far and as deep into things, as any now-a-days; and yet we find them acknowledging, That they ſaw [*through a Glaſs darkly*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12.] i. e. as ſome render it, Through Spectacles. And if ſuch Quick-ſighted perſons ſtood in need of ſuch Glaſſes to help their Eye-ſight, certainly now the World is grown older, and more dim-ſighted, there is none may diſdain to uſe them. But you will ſtill be ſetting up your ſelf as a Spectacle of Pride and Folly, in pretending to higher Attainments than any went before you; not conſidering, that theſe things were enjoined when Men were endow'd with as great Gifts and Graces as any can now pretend to; and are ſtill uſed by Men of far greater Abilities, than they who think they have no need of them. But you have another fine Simile, and ask, Why ſuch ſhould be forc'd to uſe Crutches, that can ſtand and go upon their own Legs? You compared Forms of Prayer before, to Spectacles,

(the Weakneſs whereof is now ſo obvious, that any ordinary Eye may ſee through it) and now you compare them to Crutches, which a Man would be glad to hang up, and lay aſide as ſoon as he may. And here you magnify the ſtrength of your own Legs, and tell me, That you, and ſome others that you know, can go on well enough in this Duty without ſuch Helps.

But pray (Sir) be not too bold, nor truſt too much to your own Legs, but take St. *Paul*'s Advice, [*Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall*, 1 Cor. 10. 12.] We ſaw before, that the Apoſtles uſed theſe Spectacles; and we may ſee them uſing theſe Crutches too; (which is but another word for the ſame thing) and yet I ſuppoſe they had as little need of them as you, or any body elſe. We find the Diſciples of Chriſt confeſſing their own Impotence, and ſaying, *They knew not how, or what to Pray for as they ought*; And Chriſt gave them a Form of ſound Words, with which he would have them go to their Heavenly Father. He doth not ſay, Uſe this Form till you have better Gifts, and your Legs be grown ſtronger; but abſolutely and indefinitely, *When you Pray, ſay, Our Father*,

ther, &c. *Luke* 11. 2. And the Chriſtian Church hath obſerv'd and done ſo ever ſince. Will you ſay or think, that all before you have gone upon Crutches, and that you only have arrived to that ſure-footing, as to be able to lay them aſide, and go without them? This farther ſhews, what a fine Conceit you have of your ſelf. But I think, you had better rely upon thoſe Crutches which Chriſt made, and his Apoſtles uſed, than ſtand too much upon your own Legs.

And now I think, you may eaſily ſee, that theſe fine Fetches of yours, have more of Pride than Argument in them.

But there is one thing more which muſt be conſidered in this place, and that is, you ſay, That God muſt be ſerved with the beſt you have. And you ſay true; but 'twas not ſo wiſely done to contradict it again, and ſay, That God is better ſerv'd with the Incongruities and Barbariſms of Conceived Prayer, than the more Elegant and Exact Compoſure of well-digeſted Forms. I hope (Sir) you will not ſay, that Nonſenſe and Incongruities are better or more acceptable to God, than proper and well-order'd Senſe. But this is another of your

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Incongruities: And yet you quote St. *Auſtin* for it, That where the Heart is ſound, God accepts a few Soleciſms and Barbariſms in Prayer, *&c.*

Indeed, where theſe are the beſt that we have, or can get, God accepts according to what a Man hath, and not according to what a Man hath not: But where the Church hath made better proviſion for us, he will not away with ſuch blind and lame Sacrifices: And having in our Flock a Male, will not be put off with a Corrupt thing. 1 Cor. 8. 12. Mal. 1. 13.

In ſhort (Sir) you may eaſily perceive, that you have as much need of theſe Spectacles as other Men, to help the Weakneſs of your Sight in theſe matters. And the Lameneſs of your Arguments, as well as Prayers, may call upon you to make uſe of theſe Crutches: With which therefore you may do well to furniſh your ſelf with all ſpeed.

Your loud and frequent Out-cries about ſilencing ſo many brave Men, for not uſing Forms of Prayer, ſhall be heard and conſidered in my next. In the mean time I am, SIR,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

To J. M.

SIR,

WE are yet upon the Injunction of Forms of Prayer for publick Worſhip, againſt which, you have Two farther Exceptions; the one, that it hath ſilenced many hundred of able and painful Miniſters, and deprived the Church of their Labours; the other, that it hath ſet up and encouraged a lazy Miniſtry in their room. A heavy Charge indeed! But let us ſee how it's made out,

Firſt then, you ſay, that the Enjoyning of Forms, hath ſtopt the Mouth of many able and painful Miniſters, and ſtruck many Hundreds of them Dumb at one clap. Well! But how was this done? I hope here was no violence uſed in ſtopping their Mouths, and forcing them to perpetual Silence; no, 'twas their own voluntary Refuſal of thoſe publick Prayers which many of them had uſed themſelves, and moſt of them judged lawful to be uſed, and all of them might have uſed, if they pleas'd. Why then,

then, it ſeems, they Silenced themſelves, and made it their own Choice; and what reaſon have they to complain of their own Act?

But 'twas the Enjoyning theſe Prayers that made them unlawful, and hindred their Compliance with them: How ſo? What, could the Enjoyning a lawful thing alter its Nature and make it Sinful? Is there ſuch a Malignity in the Power of Superiours, as to Poyſon a good Action, and turn it into Evil, meerly by Commanding it? I hope Sir, you have better thoughts of the higher Powers, than ſo.

To ſtate this Matter aright; Was this Injunction made by good and ſufficient Authority, and was there wiſe and good Reaſon for the making of it? Yes, it was done by our lawful Superiours both in Church and State; And that too, to preſerve Order and Unity, and to put a ſtop to thoſe Swarms of Sects and Schiſms, which the Liberty of free Prayer had brought in. Why, it ſeems then they were Silenced by Law, and ſuch a one too as they might and ought to have obey'd.

Where is the Fault then of ſtopping the Mouths of Gainſayers, and put-

putting to Silence the Ignorance of foolish Men? Besides, is it not the Will of God that Men shall pay a due Reverence and Obedience to all lawful Commands of our Superiours, who have the rule over us in the Lord? Did not God cause the Earth to open its Mouth, and Silence those that spake against *Moses* and
Numb. 16. 32. *Aaron*, who all perished in the gainsaying of *Korah*? Do we not read of some, whose Mouths must be kept with Bit and
Psal. 32. 9. Bridle, lest they shall fall upon thee? And have not many fallen upon their Governours this way, speaking Evil of the Rulers of the People and Slandering the Footsteps of Gods Anointed? And
Tit. 1. 10. does not the Apostle speak of some unruly and vain Talkers and Deceivers, whose Mouths must be stopt? And is not this the case of all such as speak and act against good Orders? So then for ought I can find, These Men are silenced by the Law of God as well as Man, for Christ himself hath commanded, that if any neglect to hear the
Mat. 18. 17. Church, that is, to obey the good Orders of it, he must be thrust out of it and be esteemed but as a Heathen Man and a Publican. Where then is the Hardship in the Case?

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Why, you ſay, Governours are to Rule, not by Conſtraint, but Willingly: But what, if ſome are unwilling to be ruled? If the ſenſe of Duty will not conſtrain them, muſt there be no reſtraint laid upon their Diſobedience? What then will become of Government? Will not this leave every one to do what is right in their own Eyes? Sit down, Sir, and conſider this.

But you will have me conſider the hard Terms that were put upon theſe Men in order to their Conformity; I ſhall Sir.

Why then, Firſt, They were required to give their unfeigned Aſſent and Conſent to all that is uſed in the Publick Prayers of the Church, or elſe, they muſt hold their Tongues: And is not this very fit, think you, that Men ſhould aſſent to the Truth, and conſent to the uſe of what is duly eſtabliſhed? Would you have them ſay one thing in the Service of God, and think another, and play the Hypocrites in Publick Worſhip? I hope not.

But there were Subſcriptions, Oaths, Declarations, and the like required, which is a Burthen upon Mens Conſciences. Why ſo? Do not all Societies re-

quire ſome Oaths of Fidelity from all that are admitted into them? Do not all the Reformed Churches abroad exact an Acknowledgment and Subſcription to their Confeſſions and Publick Worſhip; and may not the Church of *England* expect the ſame Security that all other Societies require from their Members?

Theſe, Sir, are ſome of thoſe crude, indigeſted Notions of Mr. *Baxter*, of which I told you in the beginning, and which have been largely anſwered and refuted by many learned Men, particularly by Dr. *Morrice* in his Treatiſe of *Epiſcopacy*, Dr. *Falkner* in his *Libertas Eccleſiaſtica* and Dr. *Sawel* in his *Evangelical and Catholick Unity*, which I therefore recommend to your ſerious and impartial peruſal, not doubting if you pleaſe to read them, you may ſoon ſee the Vanity of theſe Cavils, and come to a better Light than you have at preſent in theſe Matters.

But thoſe Godly Men that were thus ſilenced had another, and better way of Praying, than by Forms, and could perform that Duty in a more Spiritual and Edifying manner by their own Gift.

Pray, Sir, Who is to judge of that? Hath not God appointed Rulers in his Church,

Church, that all things may be done decently and in order? And are not we required to obey them for the Lords ſake? And how can this be, if every one may take the liberty of Praying in Publick after what manner and way he pleaſe?

Our Superiours think fit to ſettle an uniform and regular way of Publick Worſhip, that according to our Saviour's Adviſe, Men may agree in what they ask, and ſpeak the ſame things in their Prayers: And muſt Men, inſtead of obſerving ſuch wiſe and wholeſome Laws, bring a Babel and Confuſion of Tongues into the Church, and Pray one againſt another? I hope, Sir, you would not have this done.

But if we muſt have a Liturgy, you ſay, then let us have the Reformed Liturgy made at the *Savoy*, which is much more correct than the other.

It ſeems, you would have the ancient Liturgy, compos'd by our Pious and Learned Reformers, laid aſide, like an old Almanack out of date, and nothing can pleaſe you but a new and reformed Liturgy: 'Tis not to be doubted, Sir, when that is grown old, you will grow weary of that too; And if we muſt reform our Prayers as oft as ſome new

fangled Perſons will find Flaws in them, we muſt have a new Liturgy as well as a new Almanack every Year.

Have you never heard what ill things have been done under a pretence of Reformation? And do not all wiſe Men know the Danger and Miſchief of Innovation?

But the Reformed Liturgy is more correct than the other. Are you Sir, Or your Superiours to judge of that? Have not they, the Care and Government of the Church put into their Hands? And muſt they lay aſide the Antient well compos'd Prayers of the Church meerly to gratify your Reforming and new fangled Humour.

To what will this Pride of yours bring you? You already ſet your ſelf above the High Powers, and 'tis to be feared, your next Step will be that of Lucifers, to be like the Moſt High.

But while you make ſuch loud outcries againſt ſilencing ſo many brave Men, you have forgotten the ſilencing of all the Learned Biſhops and Regular Clergy of the Church of *England* in the Days of the great Rebellion: And that too by an Uſurp'd Power that took away the Life of one of the beſt Princes, and

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pull'd down the Diſcipline of one of the beſt Eſtabliſhed Churches in the Chriſtian World: Whereas the ſilencing of your brave Men was only ſtopping the Mouths of thoſe that had open'd them to do all this Miſchief; For is it not well known how they reviled that good King, and aſpers'd his Government, and by the Venom of an evil Tongue corrupted the Loyalty of a great part of the Kingdom? And certainly if the Mouth of Wickedneſs muſt be ſtopt, never any Perſons in any Age were more juſtly ſilenced.

But would you be ſerved ſo? Put your ſelf in their Caſe. Sir, If you put your ſelf in the Caſe of any Offender, there is no doubt but you would willingly eſcape unpuniſhed, how juſt and neceſſary ſoever it were to to be inflicted; For Puniſhment is againſt the Grain of Nature; and all Men are ſo tender and fond of Themſelves, as to deſire to eſcape it. You miſtake, Sir, that Golden Rule of Doing as we would be done by, which muſt be underſtood of thoſe Regular and Lawful Deſires we may reaſonably have for our ſelves, not of thoſe inordinate Wiſhes which Partiality and Self-Love may create in us: For the

Magiſtrate is to deal with Offenders, not as they could wiſh, nor as himſelf in their Caſe would be apt to deſire; (For there is none how guilty ſoever, but would avoid Puniſhment) but as Law and Juſtice do require and direct him.

If theſe Men then were ſo juſtly ſilenced by the Law of God and Man, how came they to ſpeak again, and in Conventicles too, which they themſelves had ſpoken ſo much againſt? Sure, they had no Warrant to open there; Nor can they yet ſpeak as Men having Authority; For tho' the Penalty be ſuſpended, their Obligation to ſilence ſtill continues: What then, have they a Commiſſion from Heaven to ſpeak without, or againſt Lawful Authority? No, The People ſtrike them upon the Back, and encourage them to ſpeak, and promiſe to hear them, let what will come of it: And this is all the Warrant and Authority they have yet to break this ſilence.

But is it not pity the Church ſhould be deprived of the Labours of ſo many Godly Men? Sir, it had been much better for the Church, if it had never known the Labours of moſt of them; For they laboured hard to bring Confuſion

fuſion into the Church, and Anarchy into the State; and both of them groan to this day under the ſad Effects of their Labours.

But Thanks be to God, the Church has no need, or reaſon to deſire any more of their Labours; For they have only made work for other and better Labourers, *ſc.* To root out thoſe Seeds of Diſcord and Diviſion, which they have ſown among us; And if it be poſſible, to plant Peace and Unity and Order in their Room.

But how can this be expected from ſuch a lazy Miniſtry as you ſay, Forms of Prayer have ſet up? This, Sir, is your next Plea againſt the Injunction of them; concerning which, all that I ſhall ſay at preſent is, that 'tis another juſt reaſon for ſilencing your brave Men; for the Mouth of *Calumny* ought to be ſtopt; and 'tis but neceſſary to ſtrike Detractors dumb. And whether this be any more than a down-right *Calumny* muſt be examined in my next. I am,

May 12. 1697. *Your hearty Friend and Wellwiſher,*

M. H.

LETTER XIII.

To J. M.

SIR,

YOur next Objection againſt the Injunction of publick Forms of Prayer, is, That it hath not only ſilenced many godly Miniſters; but hath ſet up, and encouraged a lazy Miniſtry in their ſtead.

This is your beloved Topick, upon which you delight to inſiſt, and upon all Occaſions recur to: For I find you Decking and Adorning your ſilenc'd Brethren with all the fine Feathers of able, painful and godly Miniſters, whilſt you ſet forth the regular Clergy in the blackeſt and moſt odious Shapes that your Talent of Variations can repreſent them. Here you call it a Lazy Miniſtry, as if it conſiſted of a Pack of idle Drones, that will take no pains, and are good for nothing. At other times, you ſtile it a lame Miniſtry, that can't go without Crutches, and ſometimes a purblind Miniſtry, that can't ſee without Spectacles: 'Tis much you had not added

ded the other common Epithets of Ignorant, Sottiſh and Scandalous Miniſtry, which are the uſual Complements you paſs upon the conformable Clergy.

It ſeems, Sir, you are not ſo far ſilenced but you can open your Mouths in rude and railing Accuſations; For one of your ſilenced Brethren tells us, That Forms of Prayer have let in ſuch Miniſters into the Church, of whom all that have any concern for the Glory of God and the Church's Repute, have cauſe to bluſh and be aſhamed.

Now, Sir, If you had any Modeſty left, you could not but bluſh and be aſhamed of ſuch falſe and impudent Calumnies: To tell you, its againſt the Rules of Civility and good Manners, thus to call Names and aſperſe any, would perhaps but little affect you, who have been ſo little bred to them; Or to ſay, The Principles of Reaſon and Morality, if hearkned unto, would teach you better things, will be as little regarded, ſince you are arrived to higher Attainments than to be brought down to common Reaſon and dull Morality.

Let us hear then what the Holy Scriptures, (for which you pretend a great Veneration) teach in this Matter, and learn

learn from thence how we are to order our Words and Actions towards each other; and there we find many ſtrict and ſevere Cautions againſt evil Speaking,
Titus 3. 2. Lying and Slandering, *Speak evil of no Man*, ſaith the Apoſtle: And *Charity*
1 Cor. 13. 5. ſo far from Speaking, that it *thinketh no evil*. Indeed there is ſcarce any Sin marked with a blacker Brand of Infamy than this of evil Speaking and Slandering our Brethren. And according to the different Degrees and Stations of the Perſons evil ſpoken of, does the Guilt of this Sin increaſe; to ſpeak evil of the Ruler of the People, is mounted up to Blaſphe-
Jude 3. my; and to ſpeak evil of Dignities, is part of the Character of thoſe Perſons, whom God reſerves for the Puniſhment of the laſt and great Day.

Now there are no Men, of whoſe Reputation we ought to be more tender, than of thoſe that Miniſter about Holy Things; For the Succeſs of their Miniſtry depends much upon the Honour and Eſteem they have in the World; and to Vilifie and Defame them, is to render their Perſons uſeleſs and their Office contemptible. Yea, the Relation they bear to Chriſt, as his Embaſſadours, ought to ſecure them from Obloquy, and procure

cure to them the Veneration of Mankind; For as the Honour, ſo the Contempt too caſt on them, will redound to him that ſent them: And therefore the Apoſtle gives a ſtrict Charge ſo to account of them, *as the Miniſters of Chriſt* and *Stewards of the Myſteries of God.* And upon that account to think *them worthy of double Honour.* And does not this very well conſiſt, think you, with thoſe black Calumnies and foul Aſperſions, which you are won't to load them withall? You will do well Sir, to conſider whoſe Character it is to be the Accuſer of the Brethren, and whoſe Work you are doing, whilſt you thus leſſen and revile the Miniſters of Chriſt. You know, the Devil hath his Name from a Calumniator, and they who delight in venting Lies and Slanders, derive their Pedigree from him who was a Liar from the beginning, and the Father of them.

1 Cor. 4. 1.

1 Tim. 5. 17.

But let us ſee what Colour of Truth there is in theſe vile Reflections? Are the Clergy then unſound in their Principles? No, this is not much pretended. What then, are their Abilities too Slender and Inſufficient for their Calling? This they will ſcarce ſay neither: I am ſure

ſure they cannot ſay it with any Colour of Truth, the Generality of thoſe within the Church, being Men of far greater Worth and Learning, than they who have ſhut themſelves out of it,

Is it their Lives then that have given this Offence: Yes, this is the main Point they inſiſt upon; For ſome ſay they are Scandalous, and others Lazy; But Sir, is there any Church upon Earth that is without Blemiſh and without Spot? Is it not the ſole Priviledge of the Church Triumphant in Heaven, to be Preſented *pure without Spot, or Wrinkle, or any ſuch thing*? Was there not a *Judas* among the Twelve Apoſtles, and will there be no diſorderly Brother among ſo many thouſand Brethren? Are all Saints, think you, that go to Conventicles? No, 'tis obvious, they are as great Sinners as any of the *Galileans*, tho' they pretend ſuch things. Will not Tares ſpring up among the Wheat, and continue ſo too, there being no Separation to be made between them till the Harveſt. And therefore all Separation now upon pretence of greater Purity is rather a piece of the Vain-glory of a Phariſee, than the Mark of a true Chriſtian.

Ephes. 5. 27.

Beſides,

Beſides, Sir, you muſt not be too credulous of evil Reports; For ſome are vented out of Malice, and others are ſpread upon Deſign: And therefore the Apoſtle exhorts not to believe, or *take up an Accuſation againſt an Elder*, without good Grounds and the Teſtimony of two or three Witneſſes. 1 Tim. 5. 19.

But if you know any for certain to be looſe in their Lives, and lazy in their Calling: Why do you not take the Advice and Method of our Saviour to reclaim them, which is, privately to admoniſh them, and tell them of their Faults; and if that will not do, to take one, or two more; and if that will not prevail, you are to acquaint the Church, where Chriſt hath appointed Rulers, either to reform or remove them. This is the direction that Chriſt gives in this Matter. Not to whiſper about in Corners, or to take pleaſure in publiſhing the Failings and Infirmities of other Men; for this is to rejoyce in Iniquity, whereas Charity caſts a Veil and covereth a Multitude of Sins, and will rather hide, than diſcloſe anothers Nakedneſs. Math. 8. 15. 16. 1 Cor. 4. 13.

Yet after all, you will be hard put to it, to find out an abler, or better Cler-

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gy for the number of them, in any part of the Chriſtian world, than that which you ſo unhanſomely aſperſe; The word of God being no where more diligently and faithfully Preached; The Sacraments more duly and decently Adminiſtred, and all the Parts of the Miniſterial Function more ſolemnly Performed than they are at this Day by the regular Sons of the Church of *England*.

But how come Forms of Prayer all this while to be charged with the Failings of thoſe that uſe them? Have godly, well compoſed Prayers of themſelves any tendency to a vitious Life; or does the devout and decent uſing of them contribute any thing to the doing the Work of the Lord negligently? No certainly: There is ſome other deſign in theſe Calumnies, Namely, By diſparaging publick Prayer, to make way for free Prayer, and by declaiming againſt the Lazineſs and Lukewarmneſs of thoſe that uſe the one, to magnifie the Zeal and Piety of ſuch as uſe the other. This is one of the Artifices of Seducers, and a piece of the cunning Craftineſs of thoſe that lie in wait to deceive.

Is not this your chief Pretence for creeping into other mens Charges to

ſup-

ſupply the Defects of a Lazy Miniſtry? Does not your Oracle Mr. *Baxter* plead this for his Conventicling, That he was therein a poor Aſſiſtant to the conformable Clergy? But what want is there of your Aſſiſtance where able Miniſters are legally ſetled? Or who deſires your Aſſiſtance?

And you know, for any to thruſt themſelves into anothers Buſineſs, without his Requeſt or Conſent, is to be a Buſie-body in other mens Matters, the Word in the Original is Αλλοτριοεπισκοπος, which ſignifies an Intruder into anothers Pariſh or Dioceſs, and to invade his Cure and Charge. And the Apoſtle exhorts all that would ſtudy to be quiet, not to intermeddle with other Mens, but to do their own Buſineſs. Beſides, This is ſo far from an Aſſiſtance, that 'tis a great Hinderance and Diſcouragment to a faithful Miniſter, to find one creeping into his Pariſh and drawing away the People committed to his Charge; Sowing the Seeds of Diſcord and Diviſion among them, and poiſoning them with evil Principles of Schiſm and Sedition*: And is not this the Aſſiſtance that you are wont to give to the conformable Clergy?

1 Pet. 4. 15.

1 Theſ. 4. 11.

Is

Is it not your great Buſineſs to ſtudy to draw from the Church to fill the Conventicle, and that merely to make Merchandize of ſuch unſtable Souls?

And is not this a great Comfort, think you, to a good Shepherd, to ſee the Wolf coming to ſcatter and devour the Flock? And are not the People mightily aſſiſted too by being miſled and preyed upon by falſe Teachers? Have you never read of ſome pretended Shepherds that *come not in by the Door into the Sheep-fold, but climb up ſome other way*, and therefore are ſaid to be no better than Thieves and Robbers in Stealing away the Sheep from their lawful Paſtors, and Betraying them to their utter Deſtruction?

John. 10. 1.

Take heed Sir, That you be not found One of that number; for to vilifie the Perſons of the Clergy, and to diſparage the Prayers of the Church, merely to draw away the Hearts of the People from both, are very bad ſigns of a good Shepherd; and how far your Diſcourſes and Practices have tended this way, you will do well to conſider. I am,

Your faithful Friend and Well-wiſher,

May 19. 1697.

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Promis'd in my laſt, to proceed to what you offer'd from Biſhop *Hall*, and Biſhop *Wilkins*; but you have ſince cut out ſome other Work for me, which muſt and ſhall be diſpatch'd before I come to that Argument; taken from Authority; aſſuring you, that it ſhall be conſider'd in due time. Firſt then, you deſire me to prove to you, That our Bleſſed Saviour preſcribed his Form to be uſed in the ſame Words by his Diſciples and Followers, which you ſay is aſſerted in my Sermon, and Letter of the *6th* Inſtant. And I think with very good Reaſon and Authority in both. And to ſatisfie your Requeſt, I ſhall prove it (1) From the expreſs Command of our Saviour, who will'd his Diſciples when they Pray'd, to ſay, [*Our Father which art in Heaven* &c;] which is ſo plain a Precept, that ſuppoſing our Saviour to intend the uſe of thoſe Words, could ſcarce be more clearly expres'd; Luke 11. 2.

for 'tis as if he had ſaid, Whenſoever you pray ſolemnly, omit not to uſe this Form of Words. And ſo you may find it paraphras'd by the Learned Dr. *Hammond*.

But you ſay the ſame Words are not uſed in one Evangeliſt, that are in another. I ſuppoſe you mean, that St. *Matthew's*, [οὕτως, after this manner, or in this wiſe pray ye] is ſomewhat different from St. *Luke's* [λέγετε, when ye pray, ſay, &c.] Now, that theſe import the ſame thing, is evident from that Form of Bleſſing
Num. 6. 23. preſcribed by God to *Aaron and his Sons*. [*In this wiſe* (in the Septuagint it is οὕτως) *ye ſhall bleſs the Children of Iſrael*,] which is generally own'd to be an Invariable Form of Benediction; and hath been uſed as ſuch, in the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Church. 'Tis thought indeed by ſome learned Men, that the Diſciples upon the firſt hearing of the Prayer in Chriſt's Sermon on the Mount, did not ſo well take it for a Form: And therefore our Saviour about a year after, upon a Motion of theirs made to him, more clearly expres'd it, and order'd them when they Pray'd, to ſay, [*Our Father* &c,] which put it out of doubt, that it was intended as a Form.

Secondly

Secondly, This may be proved, from the Occaſion of our Saviour's preſcribing this Form, which was upon the Diſciples Requeſt to him, [To teach them to pray, as *John* alſo taught his Diſciples;] Now, that St. *John* taught his Diſciples a Form of Prayer, according to the Cuſtom of the Jewiſh Teachers, is a matter beyond all Doubt and Contradiction: And that the Diſciples uſed the Forms that were delivered to them by their Teachers, I do not find queſtion'd by any. Now our Saviour approving what *John* did herein, and practiſing the ſame upon their Requeſt, by teaching them to pray, as *John* had done before, plainly ſhews, that he gave them a Form to be uſed by them; and that the Diſciples did accordingly uſe it; unleſs you will ſuppoſe, they had a leſs Opinion of Chriſt's Ability to teach them to pray, and likewiſe a leſs regard to the Form he taught them, than all other Diſciples had for their Teachers; which muſt be abſurd to imagine. Vid. Lightfoot, on Mat. 6. 9.

Thirdly, This may be proved from the Frame and Compoſure of this Prayer; which is not barely a Laying down the general Matter of Prayer, and leaving the Diſciples to Word it as they

thought fit; but putting it into an Exact, Orderly and Comprehenſive Form, and dictating the Expreſſions they were to uſe in it, with a Command annext to it, when they Pray'd, to ſay, [*Our Father*, &c.] And can you think, that when Chriſt had thus admirably Ordered and Worded their Petitions for them, the Diſciples, who were ſo ſenſible of their own Inability to Pray, ſhould lay aſide this Divine and Perfect Compoſure; and prefer their own weak and imperfect Abilities of expreſſion before it? This is, to have vain and unworthy Thoughts of the Apoſtles, and too agreeable to thoſe you have of your ſelf.

Fourthly, This may be proved from the Teſtimony and Practice of thoſe that lived near the time of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; who acknowledge it as a Form delivered by Chriſt, and did receive and uſe it accordigly. *Lucian*, who liv'd in the Days of *Trajan*, makes mention of a Prayer uſed by Chriſtians [ἀπὸ τῆς πατρῴας ἀξιώσεως] beginning with Our Father. *Tertullian* tells us, *Chriſtus novam Orationis formam determinavit*, Chriſt appointed a new Form of Prayer: And after adds, That the Chriſtians never omitted the uſe of it. St. *Cyprian*, ſpeak-

Luc. in Philip.

Tertul. de Orat. cap. 1. cap. 9.

ſpeaking of the Lord's Prayer, calls it, *Publica nobis & Communis Oratio*, Publick and Common Prayer, from the General uſe of it; and more largly declares, that Chriſt conſulting the Salvation of his People, delivered to them himſelf a Form of Prayer; and then exhorts to the uſe of it, in theſe words, "That the Fa- "ther, when we Pray, may own the "Words of the Son: And in another place, "ſince we have Chriſt for our Advocate, "let us expreſs the Words of our Advo- "cate; for how much more effectually "ſhall we obtain what we ask in "Chriſt's Name, if we ask in his Prayer? St. *Jerome* tells us, *Docuit Chriſtus Apoſtolos ſuos, ut quotidie*, &c. (i. e.) Chirſt taught his Apoſtles that every day believing in him, they ſhould ſay [*Our Father which art in Heaven.*] And St. *Auſtin*, *Omnibus neceſſaria eſt Oratio Dominica*, &c. The Lord's Prayer is neceſſary for all, even the Apoſtles themſelves, that every one ſhould ſay unto God, [*Forgive us our treſpaſſes*, &c.] And elſewhere he tells us, *Ad Altare Dei quotidie dicitur Oratio Dominica*, the Lords Prayer is daily ſaid at God's Altar. And St. *Gregory* aſſures us, that the Apoſtles at the Conſecration of the Euchariſt, did

Cypr. de Orat Dom p. 310.

Cypr. de Orat Dom

Hieron. ad Pelag. lib. 3. c. 5.

Aug Epiſt. 89.

Hom. 42.

Greg. Epiſt. Lib. 7.

did always make uſe of the Lord's Prayer. If we come down to the time of the Reformation, we ſhall find the Proteſtant Writers generally acknowledging it, to be a Preſcribed Form. *Calvin* calls it, a Form dictated by Chriſt, and ſaith, that Holy Men daily repeat it by Chriſts Command: The Claſſis of *Walachrea* tells us, that, *In Omnibus Reformatarum Eccleſiarum Liturgijs*, &c. In all the Publick Liturgies of the Reformed Churches, the Lord's Prayer is preſcribed to be uſed. But beſides all theſe Teſtimonies I will add one more, which I perſuade my ſelf with you is, *Inſtar Omnium*, and will weigh more than all the reſt, and that is, The Aſſembly of Divines at *Weſtminſter*, who, in their Annotations on *Luk*. 11. *v*. 2. have theſe Words concerning the Lord's Prayer, "It is the moſt Exact and Sacred Form "of Prayer, indited and taught the "Diſciples, (who were to teach the "whole World, the Rules and Practice "of true Religion) by Chriſt himſelf, "who is beſt able to teach his Servants to "Pray, And again, Chriſt preſcribed "this Form of Prayer to be uſed by "them. Which are the very Words you carp at in my Sermon.

Calv. Inſt. l. 4. c. 1. ſect. 23.

Conſid. Conf. Aug. p. 177.

And

And now (Sir) are you not a Bold Man, to call in Queſtion a Truth confirmed by all theſe and many more Authorities that may be produced in this caſe? I hope this was no wilful Miſtake: The beſt Excuſe that can be made for it, is, Ignorance or Inadvertency. However, you may learn from hence, to inform your ſelf better, and conſider more for the future what you affirm or deny in ſuch weighty Matters. But your Comfort is, You have the Learned *Grotius* on your ſide, who tells us, "That "Chriſt preſcribed not this Prayer to "be uſed as a Form, but as a Pattern to make other Prayers by. 'Tis well known (Sir) that *Grotius* herein goes againſt the general Stream of Interpreters, and is blamed by many Learned Men for this Extravagant and Unreaſonable Conceit. But I will ſee for once, whether you will leave the Aſſembly of Divines to ſtick to *Grotius*, and prefer his ſingle Opinion before theirs. For they tell us the quite contrary, not only in the forecited place of their Annotations, but in the very Directory it ſelf: Where you may read theſe Words, "The Lord's "Prayer which Chriſt taught his Diſci-"ples is not only a pattern of Prayer, but

Direct. after ſerm.

"its ſelf a Comprehenſive Prayer, and we "recommend it to be uſed in the Prayers "of the Church.

But we never read (ſay you) that our Lord or his Diſciples did uſe theſe Words afterwards in Prayer, tho' we read of their Praying in ſeveral places.

Is all that Chriſt and his Apoſtles ſaid or did, recorded (think you) in Holy Scripture? We never read, that the Apoſtles uſed that Form preſcribed by Chriſt in Baptiſm [*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*,] will it follow thence, that they never uſed it? 'Tis ſufficient, that Chriſt commanded both theſe Forms; and ſince we read nothing to the contrary, we may well enough think that the Apoſtles were ſo religiouſly dutiful as to obſerve their Maſter's Command in both; And that they who were ſent by Chriſt, to Teach and Baptize all Nations, did both Teach and Baptize as he directed them. And here I cannot forbear cautioning you againſt that Wild Principle, of Believing nothing, but what is expreſly recorded in Holy Scripture: For this will cauſe you ſhortly to follow ſome of your Diſciples and to turn Anabaptiſt, by denying Infant-baptiſm, becauſe

cauſe we never read in Scripture, that Infants were baptized. But tho' there be no Expreſs Record in Scripture of the Apoſtles uſing the Lord's Prayer (of which ſome Learned Men have obſerved many Hints and Intimations, yet) we have abundant Teſtimony and Tradition for it, from the Writings of the Fathers, from the Age of the Apoſtles to the preſent Times. And what greater Evidence can any reaſonable Man deſire? And yet after all, you ſay, you do not Scruple the uſe of the Lord's Prayer, as a Form, in the ſame Words. Certainly (Sir) Our Saviour is much beholding to you, that you have not ſo ſtrong an Averſneſs to his Commands; but that you can vouchſafe to ſay ſometimes as he hath taught you. But when alas! will you arive to that piece of Humility and good Manners, as to prefer His Words before your Own, and, in Honour at leaſt to his Perſon, if not in Obedience to his Command, make it a Conſtant and Invariable part of your Devotion?

Mericasab. and Dr. *Towerſon* on the Lord's Prayer.

But you conclude like a Man reſolv'd to ſtick to his Point, and to ſay with *Grotius*; That our Lord did not command the recital of the Words, nor tie up his

his Followers to Words and Syllables. Pray (Sir) be not too obſtinate; Let the Ancient Fathers and Aſſembly of Divines have ſome ſmall Sway with you. Do but think (Sir) that 'tis poſſible for you to be miſtaken; and conſider, what an Unreaſonable piece of Confidence and Preſumption it is, to oppoſe the General Senſe of the Chriſtian Church in all Ages. And if you could be perſwaded to this ordinary piece of Modeſty and Self-denyal, there might be yet ſome hopes of your Conviction.

Your ſecond Requeſt is to explain to you the Meaning of the extraordinary Gift of Praying by Inſpiration; about which, you have ſome Exceptions, which ſhall be anſwered in my next. I am,

SIR,

Your affectionate Friend

and Wellwiſher,

May 25. 1697.

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

To J. M.

SIR,

HAving in my laſt given you (I hope) ſome Satisfaction about the Apoſtles uſing the Lord's Prayer, according to their Maſter's Command and Direction; I proceed now to give you ſome Account of that Extraordinary Gift of Praying by Inſpiration that was granted to them, which you deſire may be explained to yon. To which end you may obſerve, (1) That when St. *John*, the Herald and Harbinger of our Saviour, Proclaimed him to the World, he declared of him, that he ſhould Baptize his Diſciples with the Holy Ghoſt; meaning that the Holy Spirit ſhould come down viſibly upon ſome of them, to aſſure them of the Truth of his Doctrine; and to enable them to Preach and Propagate it to the whole World. (2) In the next place you may obſerve, that when our Bleſſed Saviour firſt called and gathered his Twelve Apoſtles, among other things, for their Encouragement, he

Mat. 3. 11.

Mark 13. 11, he bid them [To take no thought before-hand what they ſhould Speak, nor to Premeditate; for it ſhould be given them in that hour what they ſhould Speak; for it is not ye that Speak (ſaith he) but the Spirit of my Father that Speaketh in you;] meaning, That they ſhould find that aſſiſtance from a Divine Spirit, that ſhould help them far better in the Work they were called to, than any Fore-thought or Premeditation of their own could do; for the Spirit of God ſhould Speak in and through them. (3) Again, Chriſt a little before his Aſcenſion into Heaven promis'd to ſend them the Holy Ghoſt to be their Paraclete; which Word, ſignifies not only a Comforter to comfort them in his abſence, but an Advocate to plead their Cauſe, by teaching them to pray, and forming their Petitions for them.

Joh. 14. 16, 17. 1 Joh. 2. 1.

Now upon the day of Penticoſt (which is our Whit-ſunday) the Spirit, according to Chriſt's moſt Gracious Promiſe, was poured out upon them; the Holy Ghoſt coming down on the Apoſtles in the Sound of a mighty Ruſhing Wind, as a Token of Inſpiration, and ſate upon their Heads in the Appearance of Fire; to repreſent thoſe pious Ardours

or

or Fervency of Spirit that ſhould accompany their Devotion: And likewiſe in the ſhape of Cloven Tongues, to ſignifie that diverſity of languages, with which they were endow'd. By this Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, the Apoſtles were furniſhed with a great Variety of Spiritual Gifts; many of which are mentioned by St. *Paul* in ſundry parts of his Epiſtles. Among theſe (as St. *Chryſoſtom* tells us) was a Gift of Prayer, [τὸ τῆς ἐυχῆς χάρισμα]; For the Spirit, that was promiſed to be poured out, is (by the Prophet *Zachary*) ſtiled [a Spirit of Grace and Supplications.] And St. *Paul* tells us, That this Spirit [helped their Infirmities] in Prayer: For God (ſaith that Father) then gave Gifts, which are alſo called Spirits (particularly mentioning this Gift or Spirit of Prayer) and he that had it (ſaith he) pray'd for the whole Multitude. By which it appears, that the Publick Offices of the Church were in thoſe Days performed by theſe extraordinary Gifts; the Holy Ghoſt inſpiring into them both the Matter and Words of their Prayers, without any help or recourſe to their own Invention.

Chryſ. in Rom 8 26.

Zach. 12. 10.

Rom. 8. 26.

And this Gift was generally accompanied with the Gift of Tongues, whereby

by the Apoſtles, who were before but ignorant Fiſher-men and Mechanicks, and ſcarce underſtood their own Mother-tongue, were by this means enabled to pray in the Languages of all Nations; and declare to each of them, the wonderful Works of God; for ſo we
Acts 2. 4. read, that the Apoſtles [were filled with the Holy Ghoſt and began to ſpeak with Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance:] This the Men of all Nations, who were then preſent at *Jeruſalem*, ſaw, and heard to their great amazement; for they marvelled to hear theſe Illiterate *Galilæans* ſpeak to Men of all Countries in their own Tongues: And without any previous Learning or Meditation pray fluently in Languages they never heard or underſtood before.

And this Gift was likewiſe attended with the Interpretation of Tongues; by which theſe Apoſtles were able to interpret in their own Vulgar Language, thoſe Prayers which themſelves or others had uttered in an unknown Tongue. Of this we read at large, 1 *Cor.* 14. Now the deſign of theſe Supernatural and extraordinary Gifts, was chiefly for the Confirmation and Propagation of the Goſpel; for ſo we read, that

Tongues

Tongues were a Sign, not to them that believed, but to them that believed not; meaning, that these Divine Impulses and Inspirations were intended for the converting of Unbelievers and propagating the Faith of Christ. And therefore to attest the Divinity of them they were frequently attended with the Gifts of Healing and Miracles: For the Apostles did not only pray for the Sick, but healed them too of all manner of Diseases with a word's Speaking: And by many miraculuos Signs and Tokens convinced the World, that they were not only sent from God, but that what they delivered were the immediate Dictates of his Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 14. 22.

Now these Extraordinary and Miraculous Gifts were peculiar only to the first Ages of Christianity; and were calculated for those Times, when the Christian Faith needed Confirmation, by the Demonstration of the Spirit and Power; for the Christian Religion being then new, and forc'd to struggle with the Opposition both of *Jew* and *Gentile*; These extraordinary Assistances were necessary to overcome the Prejudices of both, and thereby to convert some, and confirm others in the belief of it. But when

when theſe had obtained their Effects, by the ſpreading and ſucceſs of the Goſpel, which prevailed every where; And when the Spirit of God had Dictated and Finiſhed the Holy Scriptures, in which are ſufficiently contained the Rules and Directions, both for the matter and manner of our Prayers: Then began this Extraordinary Gift by degrees to ceaſe; and the Duty of Prayer to be left to that Ordinary way and means in which it continues to this Day; when, by the Help of pious and publick Forms compoſed by the Church for publick Worſhip, and other Godly Forms of our Own and Others compoſing for Private Devotion, we are ſufficiently aſſiſted to put up acceptable Prayers unto God, without the help of Inſpiration. This is (Sir,) a brief Account of the Nature and Uſe of this Extraordinary Gift of Praying by Inſpiration, together with the Time and Reaſon of its expiration.

But you ask me, Where this Extraordinary Gift is called Praying by the Spirit? In Anſwer to which, tho' St. *Paul*'s [προσεύξομαι τῷ πνεύματι] be (as you ſay) tranſlated [*praying With the Spirit*] yet it may as well be rendred [*praying By the Spirit,*] there being no

1 Cor. 14. 15.

Particle

Particle to determine it more to the one than to the other; and both the Nature of the Gift, and St. *Paul*'s Diſcourſe about it, ſeems to lead rather to this, than that. But however, tho' it be not ſo call'd in Scripture, to which I never reſtrained it, yet I preſume you have often heard, Praying by the immediate Dictates and Inſpirations of the Holy Ghoſt, for Brevity's ſake, called [*Praying by the Spirit.*] Yea, I doubt not, but you have heard, Praying by Extempore-Effuſions, called by that Name; which hath led many a well meaning Man into great Miſtakes about it: For, tho you may be wiſe enough to know, that this Extraordinary Gift is ceaſed, and ſo pretend not to immediate Inſpirations, yet there are many other Sectaries that are not arrived to this, but imagine the fond and ſudden Suggeſtions of their own Fancys in Prayer, as much the Dictates of the Holy Ghoſt, as any the Inſpirations of the Apoſtles: And there are too many Deſigning Men, who for their own Ends, are willing enough to have them think ſo. And therefore you would do well (Sir) to undeceive as many as you can, and to rectifie their Miſtakes in this Matter.

But you would have me tell you, why could not the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Chriſt pray without Inſpiration, when they had the Old Teſtament and ſome of the New, together with the Lord's Prayer, for their Direction?

The reaſon of this (Sir) is plain, becauſe our Saviour made choice of the moſt Ignorant and Illiterate Perſons for his Diſciples and Apoſtles, that his Inſtitution might appear wholly Divine, and not carried on by the help or mixture of Humane Wiſdom. You know, Chriſt's Followers conſiſted not of the Scribes and Phariſees, and other Learned Rabbies, who where well vers'd in the Law; for theſe would not believe on him; but of a Company of Fiſhermen and Mechanicks, that knew little or nothing of the Law, and leſs of any other Learning: And theſe certainly had great need of Inſpiration before they could ſay or do any thing in the Work they were called to: And therefore, Chriſt firſt gave them his Own Prayer, which they uſed and kept to, till he ſent them his Holy Spirit, to aſſiſt them with farther Inſpirations and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.

Joh. 7. 48. Mat. 4. 21, 22

But

But how did they pray in the mean time, had they no other Publick Prayers or Service but the Lord's Prayer? Yes, there was the Jewish Service, which consisted of many Forms of Prayer and Blessings appointed by God Almighty; besides the Psalms of *David* and the Law of *Moses*, which were daily read in the Temple and the Synagogues, and resorted to for some time by our Saviour and his Apostles: Besides which, Christ frequently pray'd with and for them, and daily Instructed them in the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

But you ask, when this Extraordinary Gift was vouchsafed to the Apostles and Others, was there no Ordinary Gift of Prayer? Or if there were, What was it?

(Sir,) I see no great need of your Ordinary Gift of Prayer for publick Worship, when the Publick Offices of Religion were perform'd by the Immediate Dictates and Inspirations of the Holy Ghost; but if there were any Ordinary Gift, I suppose it was that of Composing Pious Forms of Prayer for the common use of Christian Converts; for we find St. *Paul* ordering *Timothy* [*That Prayers and Supplications, and Intercessions and*

Giving of Thanks, be made for all Men; for Kings and all that are in Authority;] 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3. which is ſuppoſed by Learned Men to be a Direction given to *Timothy*, for the Compoſing ſome pious Forms for the uſe of thoſe Chriſtians that were committed to his Charge: And that they ſhould be ſo full and comprehenſive, as to take in all parts of Prayer, and extend to all ſorts of Perſons. But for your Ordinary Gift of Praying Extempore, or by ſudden Conceptions, there is not the leaſt Foot-ſtep of it, either in the Holy Scriptures, or in any Hiſtory of the Primitive Times. I hope this may ſerve to clear up ſome of thoſe obſcure and confuſed Notions you ſeem to have of this Gift. Which is heartily wiſhed by,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

May 28. 1697. **M. H.**

Your next Quere is, whether thoſe inſpired Perſons (who were beſt able) have left any publick Prayers for future Generations? And who are thoſe uninſpired Perſons who have now Commiſſion to do ſo? which ſhall be anſwered in my next.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

To J. M.

SIR,

I gave you an Account in my laſt, of that Extraordinary Gift of Praying by Inſpiration, granted to the Apoſtles and ſome other of the Primitive Chriſtians; together with the Reaſons both of the Conferring, and the Ceaſing of it.

Your next Quere is, How the Publick Service of the Church was celebrated upon, and after the ceaſing of Inſpiration?

The Anſwer whereunto, will lead me to conſider the Antiquity of Liturgies; and to ſhew the antient and conſtant Uſe of them from the Days of the Apoſtles to the preſent time.

But (1.) You ask me, where thoſe Inſpired Perſons (who were beſt able) have made or left any Publick Prayers, upon the compleating of the Sacred Canon? Now (Sir) You muſt know, that the knowledge of this being matter of Fact, and at ſuch a diſtance too, can no otherwiſe come to us, but by Tradition, and the Teſtimony of able and

competent Witneſſes; who have recorded and conveigh'd it down thro' every Age. And if you will take their words, they tell us, that about the latter end of the Apoſtles Days, when the Chriſtian Church began to be ſettled, St. *Peter*, who was the firſt Biſhop of Rome, compos'd a Liturgy for the uſe of thoſe whom he had converted to the Faith: and that St. *James*, the firſt Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, did the like for thoſe committed to his Charge: And that the ſame was done by St. *Mark*, for his Charge at *Alexandria*. Which Liturgies are all extant at this Day; and tho' (as may eaſily be ſuppoſed of things of that nature) they have undergone ſome Alterations in ſo long a Tract of Time, yet they are by Learned Men thought to be, for the moſt part, the Genuine Works of thoſe Apoſtles. And your Friend, Mr. *Beza*, plainly intimates ſo much; for he ſaith; *Quæ ad ordinem ſpectant, ut Precum Formulæ, et cætera ejuſmodi, diſpoſuit Apoſtolus in Eccleſiis*; The Apoſtles did ſet in order in the Church, ſuch things as had relation unto Order, as Forms of Prayer, and the like. *Dyonyſius* the *Areopagite*, who was Cotemporary with the Apoſtles, teſtifies, that there

1 Cor. 11. 34.

Eccl Hier. p. 77

there were then Forms of Prayer, to which all the People ſaid *Amen*. And tho' ſome doubt hath been made, whether the Book in which this is recorded, be his, yet 'tis by all granted to be exceeding Ancient. In the next Age to the Apoſtles, *Pliny* in his Letter to *Trajan* makes mention of ſet Forms of Hymns and Praiſes us'd by Chriſtians at that time: *Soliti ſunt* (ſaith he) *Carmen Chriſto quaſi Deo dicere, ſecum invicem.* And both *Ignatius* and *Juſtin Martyr* ſpeak of [Εὐχὰ κατὰ, and Διατάξις κατὰ (i. e.) Common Prayer that was uſed among them. In the ſecond and third Centuries, we find *Origen* in his Book againſt *Celſus*, ſpeaking of Chriſtians uſing [Περιγεγραμμέναις εὐχαῖς] the Appointed Prayers: And in one of his Homilies citing a piece of Liturgy then in uſe, *Frequenter in Oratione dicimus, Da Omnipotens, da nobis partem cum Prophetis* (i.e.) We often ſay in our Prayers, give Almighty God, O give us a Part with the Prophets. St. *Cyprian* makes frequent mention of a Liturgy in the Church of *Carthage*, telling us of the Miniſters ſaying in the beginning of it, *Surſum Corda*, Lift up your Hearts; and the People anſwering, *Habemus ad Dominum*,

Epiſt. ad Trajan.

Origen. contra celſ. lib. 1. 8

Homil. 11.

minum, We lift them up unto the Lord. And the ſame is derived down, and uſed in our Liturgy to this Day. And *Tertullian* mentions the ſame Form of Abrenunciation that is ſtill uſed in our Office of Baptiſm; and withal adds, That they had ſet Hymns, for particular Times and Occaſions. *Euſebius* in the life of *Conſtantine*, tells us, that beſides the [Εὐχὰς ἐνδιαθέτους] the eſtabliſhed Prayers, he ordered Forms of Prayer to be compoſed for the uſe of the Soldiers. Which plainly ſhews his Approbation and Uſe of them.

Euſeb. in Vit. Conſtant. lib. 9. c. 19 &c.

If we go forward to the fourth and following Centuries, we ſhall find our ſelves compaſs'd about with a whole Cloud of Witneſſes, St. *Cryſoſtome*, St. *Ambroſe*, St. *Baſil*, St. *Auſtine*, with many others; ſome whereof were Framers of Liturgies. Beſides, many Counſils that decreed and eſtabliſhed the uſe of them, (As) *Conſil. Laod. Can.* 18. *Carthag. Can.* 23. *Milev. Can.* 12.

If we come down to the Times of the Reformation, we ſhall find all the Lutheran and Foreign Churches uſing Forms of Prayer for Publick Worſhip. Yea, if we come to *Geneva*, and conſult your beloved *John Calvin*, the Father of Presbytery, we ſhall find him uſing a con-

conſtant Form of Prayer in his Publick Miniſtration: And likewiſe compoſing Forms of Prayer for the uſe of *Geneva*; which were approved of and eſtabliſhed by the Authority of that City. And for his Judgment of the uſe of Forms, you may take it from himſelf, who in his Letter to the Lord Protector thus declares himſelf, "For ſo much as concerns "Forms of Prayer and Eccleſiaſtical "Rites, *Valde probo, &c.* I much approve "that they be determined ſo, that it "may not be lawful for Miniſters in their "Adminiſtrations to vary from them. By which you may ſee, how far you do degenerate from the Principles, and are gone off from the Practices of the firſt Founder of your Sect. Yea, 'tis well known, that thoſe who were ſtyled Puritans or Presbyterians, before the great Rebellion, Conſcientiouſly uſed and frequented the Publick Liturgy, and inveigh'd bitterly againſt all ſeparation from it. Thus you ſee the Chriſtian Church ever ſince the days of Inſpiration, hath every where Celebrated Publick Worſhip by Liturgies or Compoſed Forms of Prayer. So that Extempore or Free Prayer was a thing unknown to the primitive and purer Ages of the Church; and

Calv. Epiſt. 87.

and plainly appears to be a late Invention. By whom it was brought in, and for what End, I ſhall accquaint you very ſhortly. In the mean time, what can it be aſcribed to, but to your Ignorance or Pride, thus to ſet up your Self againſt the Judgment and Practice of the whole Chriſtian Church in all Ages?

2. But you ask (Secondly) Who are thoſe Uninſpired Perſons that have a Commiſſion to compoſe theſe Prayers? and likewiſe, who are they that have Authority from God to impoſe them?

For the compoſing theſe Publick Prayers, that (undoubtedly) lies in the Power of the Church; which from the beginning of Chriſtianity hath ever exerciſed it. For, Chriſt ſent forth his Apoſtles not only to teach, but to Rule and Govern his Church; That all things in it may be done Decently and in Order, and to the uſe of Edifying: And *Beza* (as was before obſerved) tells us, that Forms of Prayer were one of thoſe things that related to Order, and were ſettled by them. St. *Paul* directs *Timothy* to take care that Publick Prayers be made or compoſed for the uſe of the Church of *Epheſus*, of which he was made an Over-ſeeer. Now this being a matter

1 Tim. 3. 1, 2.

of

of ſtanding uſe and benefit to the Church, is derived down to their Succeſſours, with whom Chriſt promiſed to be to the end of the World. And therefore we find, that the Rulers and Paſtors of the Church, meeting in Synods and Convocations, have upon Mature Advice and Deliberation framed theſe Publick Liturgies ever ſince. The *Milevitan* Council forbids the admitting any other Prayers in the Church for the Publick Worſhip of God, than thoſe that are ſo made and ſo approved; leſt thro' Ignorance or want of Care ſomething might ſlip in that was contrary to the Faith. Mile. Council. Can. 12. 23.

But who are they (ſay you) that have Authority to impoſe them upon all Miniſters, who reſiding with, are preſumed beſt to know the Neceſſities of the People?

The Compoſing of Prayers, we ſee is in the Church; the Impoſing them lyes in the Chief Magiſtrate, who is Supreme in his Realm in all Cauſes Eccleſiaſtical as well as Civil. For the Church being incorporated into the State, neither of them can be well govern'd unleſs the Prince be Supreme in both. And therefore a great Man hath told

hath told us ; " That the Church direct-
" ing, and the Sovereign Enacting, have
" ever had this Power ſince the State be-
" came Chriſtian. Neither can we ſee, how things can be better ordered, than that what is well conſidered and tendered by the Church, ſhould be ratified by the Sanction and Authority of the Prince. But you (it ſeems) think your ſelf wiſer than both, and can order theſe things better by your preſent Conceptions, than they upon all their Deliberation ; and that, becauſe you reſiding with, can better know the Neceſſities of the People.

When (Sir) will you be ſo modeſt as to think, the Rulers in Church and State, better Judges of the general Neceſſities of the People, than you, or any private Perſon ? Is there any thing in the People you have gathered, or rather ſtolen out of anothers Flock, which is not common to Men ? Indeed one of the greateſt Neceſſities they labour under, is, the want of Inſtruction in the Nature and Neceſſity of Order, Decency and Unity, in the Worſhip of God ; and the danger of Schiſm and Separation from it, that they may return to their lawful Paſtors, and to Chriſt

Chriſt the Chief Shepherd and Biſhop of their Souls. But they are never like to have this Want ſupply'd by you, nor to hear nor learn any thing of it. The truth of the matter is, the People know your Neceſſities, and you find them more forward to relieve them, than you are to let them know or redreſs theirs.

But you would fain know, whether Atheiſtical Governours, Mahometans, Arians, Papiſts, may give order for theſe Compoſures, and oblige all Miniſters to uſe them, and no other?

(Sir) In what hands ſoever God Almighty is pleaſed to lodge the Supreme Power, you are to obey all their Lawful Commands, for the Lord's ſake, from whom they derive their Power; and be thankful unto God if they do not exceed the Bounds of their Commiſſion. But if at any time they ſhould tranſgreſs the Limits of their Authority, by requiring any ſinful or unlawful thing; you are directed what to do, (*viz.*) [*To obey God rather than Man*, which you know was the caſe of the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians under their Heathen Governours. But 'tis no ſmall piece of Ingratitude, to vent ſuch vile In-

Inſinuations under ſo Pious a Prince, and ſuch Wiſe Governours as God hath bleſt us withal; where the hardeſt thing you can complain of, is the enjoyning Forms of Prayer, which were preſcribed by Chriſt himſelf, and uſed by Chriſtians ever ſince.

But there is a witty Argument of a Brother of yours, againſt the Antiquity of Forms, that muſt not be omitted, and that is this. *Lactantius* and other ancient Fathers tell us, that the Chriſtians in their Times Pray'd with their Eyes lifted up to Heaven, and not looking down on a Book; and thence infers, That they Pray'd without Book, and conſequently without Forms.

An Igenious Obſervation, and worthy to be engraven on Marble for the benefit of all ſucceeding Ages! But is it impoſſible (think you) to take off the Eye from a Book in a known Form? And is there no leiſure to look up to Heaven in the uſe of thoſe Prayers, which many can recite *memoriter*, and moſt, *Carptim & Stringente Oculo*? Certainly this is not only poſſible, but daily practiſed; and therefore half an Eye may ſee the Weakneſs of this Objection. But it may be worth the enquiry,

quiry, how they may be ſaid to lift up their Eyes to Heaven, who Pray winking and with their Eyes ſhut? Are not ſuch in the number of thoſe who [*have Eyes and ſee not*] or wilfully ſhut them againſt the Light? You may conſider this at your leiſure. I am,

Your Humble Servant,

June 5th. 1697.

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

To J. M.

SIR,

THe next thing you desire is to give you the Character of the Pharisees and their Prayers, which I here send you, that you may the better see how much you resemble them: And to that end I shall begin,

First, With the Name, which coming from the *Hebrew* word פָּרַשׁ which signifies to separate, shews a Pharisee to be all one with a Separatist; and that they were so called from their Separation, for they struck off both from the Religious and civil Society of their Brethren, and were the great Separatists in the Jewish Church: How well you are like them in this, is obvious to all Men of Sense, who cannot but see and bewail your Separation. And yet you would fain perswade the People, that you are no Separatist, but only meet to serve God in several Places: But (Sir,) Is your Separation, think you, only Local, as one Parish is from another? Is it not a real

real withdrawing from the Eſtabliſh'd Worſhip of the Church, and ſetting up different Communions, and different ways of Worſhip in oppoſition to it? Is it not *Altare adverſus Altare*, a Conventicle againſt a Church? With what Face can you deny ſo plain a Truth! But herein you ſhew your ſelf a true Phariſee, from the Name; Let us go on

Secondly, To the Sect of the Phariſees; and here we ſhall find them pretending to greater Strictneſs than other Men, as the ground of their Separation; and therefore we find it called the ſtrict Sect of the Phariſees; for they confin'd all Holineſs to their own Sect, ſtiling others the People of the Earth, and thinking themſelves the only Darlings and Favorites of Heaven, and therefore withdrew from them for fear of having their Holineſs ſtain'd and defiled by them: Their Language was, Stand off, come not nigh me, for I am holyer than thou: They blam'd our Saviour for not keeping the Sabbath with their Strictneſs; they did not like the Freedom of his Converſation, calling him a Glutton, and a Wine-biber, for eating and drinking with Publicans and Sinners; and when a certain Woman fell

Acts 26. 5.

Luke 7. 34. v. 39.

at his Feet and Kiſſed them, one of them ſaid, if he were a Prophet he would know who or what manner of Woman this is that toucheth him, for ſhe is a Sinner. And can there be a more lively reſemblance both of your Pretences and Practices? Do not you look upon your ſelves, as the only Saints; and withdraw from others, becauſe they are Sinners? Do you not delight to whiſper about, and aggravate the Failings of others, and applaud the Purity and Sanctity of your own Sect? Is there any thing more viſible both in your Diſcourſes and Demeanor than this, which was the very Guiſe of the Phariſees and the Hypocrites? But I proceed

Thirdly, to the Office of the Phariſees, and that was to teach and expound the Law unto the People, and this they did with ſo much Inſincerity and Falſhood, that our Saviour was forc'd to expound it over again, to reſcue it from their falſe Gloſſes and corrupt Interpretations, by which they made void the Law of God. And how well you reſemble them in this way of teaching the People, a very ſlender Obſervation may inform us: You know, Sir, how [*Curſe ye Meroz,*] hath been apply'd formerly:

Mat. 5.

And

And what uſe hath been made of that of the Pſalmiſt, [*To bind their Kings in Chains and their Nobles in fetters of Iron:*] You cannot forget how all that was threatned againſt the Kings of the *Canaanites*, and *Amorites*, whom God for their Idolatry commanded to be rooted out, was made uſe of againſt one of the beſt Princes that ever ſate upon a Throne; and you cannot but know how thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, [*Come out from among them, and be ye Separate*] which was a call from Heatheniſm and Idolatry, have been made uſe of to warrant Factions and Separations in a Chriſtian Church: Its too well known and felt too, how the Goſpel of Chriſt hath been made of none effect by ſuch perverſe Interpretations; ſo that if you will behold your ſelf in this Glaſs of the Law, you may ſoon ſee the Face of a Phariſee. But let us go on,

Fourthly, To the Doctrin of the Phariſees, and this we ſhall find to conſiſt of many rigorous and uncommanded Auſterities: For they placed Holineſs in ſome things which God never required, and fix'd a Brand of Sinfulneſs on others which were no where forbidden: Not to eat with unwaſhen Hands, was

a great piece of their Religion, and they ſuperſtitiouſly abſtained from many things, which were never made unlawful to them; and is not this the very Hue and Complexion of your Religion? Do you not place a great part of your Holineſs in ſeparating from others, and uſing Extempore Prayers, which are no where commanded? And likewiſe in religiouſly abſtaining from Forms of Prayer, kneeling at the Sacrament, and other innocent and indifferent Rites which are no where Prohibited? By which means you either willfully or unwillingly fall into that Superſtition, which you are wont ſo frequently and falſely to charge upon others. But I proceed,

Fifthly, To the Life and Manners of the Phariſees, who tho pretending to greater Holineſs, are often rebuked by our Saviour for many and great Enormities; for they neglected Judgment and Juſtice, and other weightier matters of the Law: They paſſed by the Duties of Morality and Honeſty, as things too low for Men of their Attainments. We find our Saviour Cautioning his Diſciples againſt the Leaven of the Phariſees, which leaven'd the whole Lump of their

1 Cor. 5. 8.

Sect,

Sect, and that was of different kinds; for we read of the Leaven of Pride, which puff'd them up; the Leaven of Malice and Wickedneſs, which ſoured their Minds againſt other Men; the Leaven of Hypocriſy, which made them all Shew, and no Subſtance. And as this Leaven was of different kinds, ſo did it appear in different Effects; they had it in their Face, which made them look ſoure; they had it in their Tongue, which made them ſpeak great ſwelling Words of Vanity; they had it in their Doctrin, which made it ſmell of rank Corruption and Superſtition: In a Word, they were leavened all over, and they who boaſted ſo much of their greater Sanctity, were by our Saviour ſet forth as the greateſt Inſtances and Monuments of Hypocriſy. I am loth here to draw the Parallel, and therefore ſhall leave you and others to judge how like it is. But,

Luk. 12 1.

Mat. 16. 12.

Laſtly, The main thing you refer to in the Phariſees, is their Prayers, which were remarkable for Two things, their Length and their Loudneſs; for when they had a mind to rob the Spittle, or devour a Widows Houſe, for a pretence they made long Prayers; when

Mat. 23. 14.

they were willing to be heard and ſeen
Mat. 6. 5. of Men, they Opened upon all occaſions, and prayed in the very Corners of the Streets; and perhaps Face cannot better anſwer to Face in Water, than your Prayers do to theirs, both in the make and deſign of them; and 'twas an Ingenious Obſervation; that few are like the Phariſees for their long Prayers, who are not extreamly like them for ſomething elſe.

But you ask, Where are the Phariſees blamed for their Babling and vain Repetitions in Prayer? Sir,

Are they not ſharply rebuk'd by our Saviour for their long Prayers, which together with their long Robes, were made a Covering for all their Rapine and Injuſtice? And are not vain Repetitions the main Ornaments and Ingredients of long Prayers? Do you not find one of them going to God with this
Luke 18. 11, 12, &c. proud and impertinent Harangue, [*God I thank thee, I am not as other Men, Extortioners, Adulterers*, &c.] and after he had reckoned up ſome of his Virtues and Perfections, thought that God could do no leſs than Juſtifie him as much as he had done himſelf; and what think you, Sir, Is not this vain Babling? Can

any

any thing be more Irkſom and Nauſeous both to God and Man?

But is not this a Miſquotation or extemporary Effuſion, ſay, you to affirm that of the Phariſees, which was ſpoken of the Heathens?

No, 'tis a frequent and ordinary Alluſion, to apply the ſame Words to one that were ſpoken of another, when they were both guilty of the ſame Fault; and this was the Caſe of the Phariſees, who falling into the vain Repetitions of the Heathen, and thinking with them to be heard for their long Prayers, (or which is all one) for their much Speaking, might be juſtly Charg'd and Rebuk'd for both.

And yet you ſeem to inſult here, as if you had got a Victory, and vainly Triumph in the empty Glory of your own Ignorance and Folly. But you ask farther, whether a ſhort Collect or Litany will more prevail with God, than a long one; and whether good Affections in a long Prayer be not as prevalent with him, as in a ſhort Litany?

Sir, We find many Prayers condemn'd for their Length, but none for their Shortneſs: Yea, the greateſt Succeſſes that we read that have attended Prayer, Mat. 8. 2. Luke 18. 13, 28.

have been found to be given to ſhort ones; *Solomon*, who was the wiſeſt of Men, hath not only preferr'd theſe, but required them too in all our Addreſſes unto God, willing that our Words unto him ſhould be few; and that for good reaſon too; for if a Word be enough to the Wiſe, there can be no need of many to him, who is Wiſdom it ſelf: Beſides, few Words are a better ſign of Modeſty and Reverence to Superiors, and conſequently of that Humility that becomes us in our Approaches to our Maker, than tedious and long winded Speeches. But, what is moſt conſiderable, great intention of mind, and ſuch as ſhould go along with our Prayers, ſpend the Spirits too faſt to continue long; and therefore 'tis impoſſible to keep up that heighth of Affection and Devotion in a long Prayer that we may in a ſhort: For Experience ſhews us, that Length and Tedioufneſs blunt the edge of the Mind, and make it to grow weary and impatient: Whereas, Breaks and Interruptions call upon the Mind afreſh and renew its Vigour and Intention: And therefore many ſhort Collects, each of which beginning with ſome Attribute of God proper to uſher

Eccl. 5. 2.

uſher in the Requeſt, and ending with the Merits and Mediation of Chriſt, muſt give greater life to our Prayers, and add greater Efficacy and Succeſs to them, than one long and continued Prayer can do. So likewiſe in Litanies, where the People have a ſhare in each Supplication, their Devotion may be much better Awakened and Enlivened, than in a continued Harangue, where the People have no part, and many times can ſcarce ſay Amen. Thus

Sir, I have given you the Picture of a Phariſee at his Prayers: If it look too hard upon you and ſhew you the Features and Lineaments of your own Complexion, you muſt thank your ſelf, not only for imitating and tranſcribing ſo bad a Copy, but for calling ſo earneſtly for the Character of them. I cannot doubt your acceptance, and ſhall therefore reſt,

SIR,

Your aſſured Friend and Well-wiſher,

June 10.
1697.

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Come now to what you have often called for, and that is, to prove Extempore or Free Prayer, to be a late Invention brought into theſe Kingdoms by the ſubtlety of Popiſh Emiſſaries, which you ſay is aſſerted in my Sermon; and I doubt not but with very good Reaſon and Truth.

That 'tis a late Invention, hath been proved in ſome meaſure already; becauſe Antiquity makes mention only of two Ways of Praying, *ſc.* by the Immediate Inſpirations of the Holy Ghoſt, and by the uſe of Publick Forms.

When our Saviour called his Diſciples and Apoſtles, he indowed them with extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, by which they were enabled to Pray by the immediate Aſſiſtance and Inſpirations of the Holy Spirit; and this continued a while for the Confirmation and Probation of the Goſpel; but when the Goſpel obtaining every where, this ex-

extraordinary Gift of Praying was withdrawn, then the Ordinary way of Praying by Publick Forms, took place, and this hath continued and is derived down through the ſeveral Ages of the Church to this day.

Whereas Praying Extempore, without the help of Inſpiration, and in oppoſition to Eſtabliſhed Forms, is a thing that was never heard of, or practiſed for above a Thouſand years after Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and hath plainly appeared to be a late Artifice made uſe of by cunning Men to ſerve their own Ends and Purpoſes. When the Church of *England* had by the Bleſſing of God, happily Reformed and caſt off the Errors and Corruptions of *Rome*, and that Church had thereby loſt a very great part of its Power, Patrimony, and Preferments; great Art was uſed to reduce it back again, and by undermining the Reformation, to regain their loſt Prize: And becauſe they found no Tool more effectual to work by, than this of Extempore Prayer, as being moſt apt to catch and deceive the People, they did not fail to make uſe of it; and this we ſhall find to be the Riſe and Original of this way of Praying: For the

the clearing and confirming whereof you must consider,

First the nature of the thing to be proved; And

Next, The proper Evidence or way of proving it; for to expect the same kind of Proof for every thing, and to look for Demonstrations in matters that are not capable of it, hath been ever esteemed a piece of great Ignorance and Folly.

Now the thing before us being a matter of Fact, is only to be proved by Testimonies, and such Authentick Records as no wise or impartial Man hath any just reason to deny; and if it hath this Evidence for the Truth of it, 'tis as much as any reasonable Person can desire; and that it hath this, I doubt not to make apparent to any that hath no wrong Byas to draw him away from the belief of it. To this end you must know, Sir,

That there is in *Rome* a Society called *Congregatio de propagandâ fide*, whose chief business it is to choose out and send abroad Emissaries into all Parts of the World, to propagate the Romish (which they call the Catholick) Faith, and to reduce Hereticks that are gone off from it.

it. Now the perſons they make choice of for this Imployment, are the fitteſt they can pick out of all Orders and Fraternities, but more eſpecially of the Order of the Jeſuits, who being bred up to all the Arts of Inſinuation, and likewiſe to ſome skill in many ordinary and mechanical Arts, are known to be the ableſt Inſtruments for the carrying on of this Work; and Theſe are found under ſundry Masks and Diſguiſes in moſt parts of the reformed Countries. Moreover you muſt note,

That one of the principal Wiles and Methods made uſe of to compaſs this end, is to create Differences and Diviſions where they come, that by unſetling the Minds of Proteſtants, they may the better ſhake the Principles of the reformed Religion, and by running the Round of various Sects and Hereſies, they may at laſt be brought to wheel about and to ſettle in what they ſtile the Catholick Faith: 'Tis the known Maxim of their great Politicians, that the Diſcord of Hereticks is the Security of the Church; and Biſhop *Whitgift* in the days of Queen *Elizabeth* ſhews, that the oppoſing of Uniformity was the great Artifice of the Papiſts, to ſubvert the Proteſtant Religion;

Bella Hæreticorum Pax Eccleſia.

gion; and which way their Endeavours ſtill tend may be ſeen with half an Eye; all their Hopes being founded upon our Diſſentions: Of this you may read more at large in Dr. *Falkener's Libertas Eccleſiaſtica.*

Pag. 6. Sect. 2.

Now there is no one thing, which they have found more effectual to cauſe and ferment Diviſions, than this of Extempore Prayer, whereby under the notion of a more ſpiritual way of Praying, they have brought the People out of love with all Antient and Godly Forms, and ſet them a madding after vain and new Inventions; and having found this ſo well to anſwer their Expectations, you may be aſſured ſuch cunning Polititians will not be wanting to promote and practiſe it. And that this was the firſt Riſe, and is ſtill their main reaſon of encouraging this way of Praying, I come now more directly to prove.

Though there are many known and well atteſted Stories, of Romiſh Prieſts and Jeſuits being found in various Diſguiſes, wheedling and ſeducing the People by this Artifice; yet becauſe ſome among our ſelves have fallen into the ſame way for their own Ends; 'twill be hard to remove their Prejudices by any private

private (though never ſo well atteſted) Relations of this kind.

I ſhall therefore give you two very remarkable Inſtances hereof confirmed by ſuch Publick Authentick Teſtimony, as no unbyaſs'd perſon can have any juſt Exception againſt, and they are, *Faithful Cummin*, and *Thomas Heath*; the one a Dominican Fryar, and the other a Jeſuit: The Examination of the firſt was taken before Queen *Elizabeth* and the Lords of the Council by *Matthew Parker*, then Arch Biſhop of *Canterbury*; an Extract of which was found in the Memorials of my Lord *Cecil*, an eminent Stateſman in the Reign of that Queen, from whence it was tranſmitted to the moſt Reverend Arch Biſhop *Uſher*; and coming into the hands of Sir *James Ware*, was by that means communicated to the Publick. The Examination of the other was taken by the Biſhop of *Rocheſter* in the preſence of the Dean and Chapter of that Church; the Narrative whereof was taken out of the Regiſtry of that See. So that no matter of Fact can be proved by better Evidence. Having ſeen the Evidence let us hear the Fact, which in ſhort was thus.

Faith-

Faithful Cummin under the Diſguiſe of a more refined Proteſtant, made frequent uſe of this more Spiritual way of Praying; on purpoſe (as it plainly appeared) to bring the People into a hatred and contempt of the Publick Prayers of the Church, which he reviled as a Tranſlation of the Maſs, and a ſtinting the Spirit of Prayer, by which means he greatly diſtracted the Minds of the People, drew many from the Church, and ſowed thoſe Seeds of Diſcord among them, that are not rooted out to this day: After his Examination he cunningly made his Eſcape, and haſtened to *Rome*, where he gave the Pope an account of this Negotiation; who being well pleas'd with his good Service, gave him a liberal Reward for his pains; and this was the occaſion of that Act of Parliament in the days of that Queen, requiring all People to repair every Sunday to Divine Service, under the penalty of Twelve pence for every default; which was to bring them back again to the Eſtabliſhed Worſhip of the Church, whom he and other Emiſſaries had ſeduced from it.

Thomas Heath in like manner venting his Talent of free Prayer in ſeveral places, deluded many poor Souls into a vain Conceit

and love of this, which he called a more Spiritual way of Worſhip; and having ſpent ſome time in this vile Trade of perverting and ſeducing the People, was at length diſcovered by a Letter caſually dropt from him, which betrayed his Correſpondence with the Jeſuits abroad; and being thereupon farther ſearched, there were found about him his Beads, with a Licenſe from the Fraternity of the Jeſuits, and a Bull from the Pope to Preach what Doctrine that Society pleas'd for the dividing of Proteſtants.

The Examinations of both theſe are publiſhed at large by the learned Dr. *Nalſon* in a Treatiſe entituled, *Foxes and Firebrands*, to which I refer you.

'Tis not to be doubted, Sir, (as that learned Author obſerves) but from the Succeſs of their Agents the Pope and Colledge *de Propaganda fide*, have been induſtrious enough to improve this Advantage to ſtock us with diſguiſed Emiſſaries, to increaſe our Differences, and inflame Mens Minds, in hopes to deſtroy our Church by our own Diviſions. How active and buiſy they have been ever ſince the Reformation to embroil us, the Hiſtories of the late Reigns, may eaſily ſatisfy us; what great hand they had in raiſ-

ing and fomenting the Civil Wars; what Part they Acted in the Tragedy of King *Charles* the First, whom they could never bring over to favour their Designs; how they Tampered with Arch Bishop *Laud*, with the offers of the greatest Perferments in *Rome*, and finding him inflexible took away his Head for refusing a Cardinals Cap: And what rejoycing there was at *Rome* upon the last Scene of both these Tragedies, triumphing that the great Enemies of their Religion were gon, is well known and attested by persons of good Quality and Credit, who were there in those Times, and were both eye and ear Witnesses of it.

Gret. Relig. Sect. 66. Yea, we find Mr. *Baxter* himself strongly suspecting that the Papists had both a Head and a Hand too in the Extirpation of Episcopacy: And Mr. *Prin* and *Du Moulin* tell us of many known Romanists, that were found in the Meetings of divers Sects, that sprang up upon the Dissolution of the Government. Among the Books and Papers of *Thomas Heath*, were found several against Infant Baptism, which gives us a hint of the rise of that Sect; and we find some of the Priests confessing how long they were

were hammering out the Sect of the Quakers.

How hard they are at work at this time, is easily discern'd by wise Men; their Expectations daily encrease with our Divisions, and they are in great hopes of having a good Harvest from the Tares they have so industriously sowed among us. By which you may see, Sir, whose Tools and Underworkers you are; and likwise what Work you are a doing, and whose Ends you serve by your groundless and unreasonable Separation.

And is it not time, Sir, to consider the Evil and Danger of your ways? Will you continue to undermine the Protestant Religion by pulling down the main Prop and Bullwork of it, and that by a Device too invented by our Adversaries merely to that purpose?

For shame, Sir, Open your Eyes, and see from whence you are fallen, and repent. Thus I have given you the Original of Extempore Prayer, and shewed it to be a late Invention brought into these Kingdoms, by the Subtilty of Romish Emissaries, merely to distract and divide the People.

If you do not like this Account of the Riſe of this Invention, you may take another Account of it from a learned Divine, who hath trac'd its Original higher, and found it to be one of the Wiles and Works of the Devil, to undermine and deſtroy all religious Worſhip: And indeed the natural tendency of this Device to produce this Miſchief plainly ſhews it to have another Spirit for its Author than that which is commonly pretended.

SIR,

If you have any thing elſe conſiderable, that is not anſwered, let me know it, and I will ſpare no pains for your Satisfaction; otherwiſe I ſhall proceed to what you ſay of Biſhop *Hall* and Biſhop *Wilkins*. I am,

Dr. *Bray* Sect. 11. on the Cat. vol. 1. p. 113.

SIR,

Your hearty Friend

and Wellwiſher,

June 17. 1697.

M. H.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

To J. M.

SIR,

HAving ſhew'd you the Divine Authority and Antiquity of Forms of Prayer, together with the Novelty and late riſe of your Free Prayer for publick Worſhip; I come now to the Authorities you alledge in favour of the Latter, and they are Biſhop *Hall*, and Biſhop *Wilkins*.

This is the ſtrong Hold, to which you always reſort; and if you are beaten out of this, I fear you are a loſt Man. But before I enter upon it, I muſt needs ſay,

Firſt, That I am glad to hear that ſome Biſhops can pleaſe you; Time was when they were look'd upon as the Limbs of Antichriſt, and were treated accordingly; and Biſhop *Hall* found this among the reſt, but now (Thank's be to God) you have other and better Thoughts of them; 'tis to be hoped, Sir, you will in time be better reconciled to the Order, and read more of their

learned Writings: But the miſchief is, unleſs they write or drop ſomething in Favour of your Faction, you have done with them; and will neither reverence their Order, nor regard their Writings: If they ſpeak as you would have them, you can afford them now and then a good Word, otherwiſe your Tongues are ſharp Arrows, and your Words are very Swords: 'Tis now the Famous and Learned Biſhop *Hall*, the Pious and Judicious Biſhop *Wilkins*, whilſt you think they have ſtruck a Blow on your ſide; but when you find your Miſtake, 'tis to be feared you will ſerve them as you have done others, and let them paſs away with plain Dr. *Hall*, and Dr. *Wilkins*. This is, (to ſay no worſe,) a very untoward piece of Partiality. Again,

Seconly, By your Quoting thoſe two Reverend Fathers, it may be hoped you will refer the Matter in debate, to the Deciſion of the Biſhops; that indeed would ſoon put an end to the Controverſy, and I am very willing to put it upon that Iſſue: But I fear you ſuſpect your Cauſe too much, to leave it in thoſe Hands: You are ſenſible that an Hundred to One is great Odd's; and know

pretty

pretty well what a ſcurvy Reflexion 'tis upon any Notion, to ſay of it, 'Tis but one Doctors Opinion; and yet at laſt I think in your Caſe 'twill hardly amount to that.

However your Hopes are in Biſhop *Hall*, and Biſhop *Wilkins*: Let us ſee then upon what Grounds theſe Hopes are founded, and what ſupport the Conventicle is like to find from thoſe two Pillars of the Church.

I begin then with Biſhop *Hall*; and here what you alledge from him, is from his Writings in Vindication of the Liturgy; A very unlikely Book to condemn what it deſigns to Vindicate, or to ſet up Free Prayer above Forms, which the Author daily us'd and practis'd Himſelf. But what is it that you Quote from him? Why, Writing in Vindication of the Liturgy, you ſay he hath theſe Words:

"This doth not plead againſt all pre-"ſent Conceptions in Prayer, or Preach-"ing; nor derogate any thing from the "Reveren'd and Pious eſteem of con-"ceiv'd Prayer.

And who ſaith it does, in its due time and place? Doubtleſs, Sir, if you can but diſtinguiſh between publick and

private Prayer, you will ſoon ſee the ſenſe of that Reverend Biſhop, and your own miſtake in this Matter: He is pleading (you ſay) in that Book for a publick and ſtanding Liturgy, for the more ſolemn and decent performance of publick Worſhip; and having learnedly evinced the expediency both of the Uſe, and Injunction of it, he ſubjoyns theſe Words. "This doth not plead, &c. Meaning, that tho the publick Service of God, be beſt celebrated by a ſet preſcribed Liturgy, that People may know their Prayers, and more readily joyn in them; yet there are Seaſons of private and ſecret Devotion, wherein they are allow'd the Freedom of their own Conceptions and Expreſſions: And what wiſe Man ever thought or ſaid otherwiſe? So that this gives no help or countenance at all to your Cauſe.

But if that will not do, you bring in that Reverend Biſhop farther ſaying, "I do from my Soul honour both, I "gladly make uſe of both; and praiſe "God for them, as the gracious exer- "ciſes of Chriſtian Piety, and the Effe- "ctual furtherances of Salvation. Doubt- "leſs, (ſays he in the next Page,) all "Chriſtian Divines have ever had that "Liberty,

" Liberty, in all the Churches that have " ever profeſt the Name of Chriſt; nei- " ther ought or can it be denyed to any, " either of the Foreign Churches, or " our own.

In the former Words that Reverend Father had ſhew'd his Opinion; in theſe he lets us know his Practice in this Matter, which is, that he honoured both publick and private Devotion, and gladly made uſe of the publick Liturgy of the Church in the one, and of his own Free and conceived Prayers in the other. A pious and excellent Practice! Which I know no Chriſtian Church does Condemn, and I heartily wiſh that all who profeſs the Name of Chriſt, would imitate.

But what is this to your uſing and preferring your own ſudden Conceptions, in publick Worſhip, before and againſt an eſtabliſh'd Liturgy? Where does that pious and reverend Prelate give the leaſt countenance to Conventicles, or ſeperate Meetings, in Oppoſition to publick Orders and Conſtitutions? Or ſet up Free Prayer as a Decoy to draw People from the ſet Prayers of the Church? This I am well aſſured you will never find in the Writings of that, or any o-

ther

ther Bishop: And yet you seem to glory in this Quotation, as if it stubb'd up all Liturgies by the Root, and that no Forms of Prayer could ever appear more, or stand before it.

Is it not strange that Men who so little understand themselves, should think themselves wiser than all their Superiours? And thus take upon them to teach, or rather to mislead and delude others? Using all their Arts to bring the People out of love with the Prayers of the Church, and seducing them from all the wholsome Orders, and Constitutions of it? Take heed, Sir, that your Artifices and Impostures be not too visible, for many well meaning People begin to discern and smell them out; and if they be too gross and palpable, it may prove of very dangerous Consequence; for, tho' *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, was a profitable Cry while it lasted; yet when the People saw the Vanity of the Idol there was an end of the Silver Shrines.

If you would know the true Sense and Mind of Bishop *Hall* in this Matter, you may find it in that mild and moderate Book of his, called, *The Peacemaker*; in which he goes as far as possible for an Accommodation; Yet there you

you may read these Words; "We are "far from giving way to every Combi- "nation of Christians, to run aside, and "to raise up a new Church of their own, "and to challenge all the Privileges in- "cident to a lawful Church of Christ, "as equally due to their Segregation; "for this were to build up *Babel* in- "stead of *Jerusalem*: *Faciunt Favos "et Vespæ* (as he goes on) even Wasps "meet together in some holes of Earth, "or hollow Trees, and make Combs "as well as the profitable Bees; but "none ever thought them worthy of "a Hive, *&c.* Where you see that Reverend Prelate's Opinion concerning Conventicles and separate Meetings, which he stiles, Segregations from the unity of the Church, and running aside from the Orders and Privileges of it; yea, he compares those that haunt them, to Wasps, who though they meet in Corners, are yet more pernicious than profitable where they Nest. Sect. 7. page 52. 53.

Again, in the same Section you may find these Words, "It may not be endu- "red that in matters of Religion every "Man should think what he lists, and "utter what he thinks, and defend what "he utters, and publish what he defends, "and

" and gather Diſciples to what he pub-
" liſheth; this Liberty, or Licentiouſ-
" neſs rather, would be the Bane of any
" Church. With much more to the ſame purpoſe.

And now, what think you, Sir, is the Famous and Learned Biſhop *Hall* a Friend to Separation and Extempore-Effuſions, in publick Worſhip? Nay, is he not a plain Enemy to all Confuſion and Diſorders of that Nature? Does he not in that forecited Treatiſe, paſſionately bewail theſe things as the Wounds and Blemiſhes of the Church? And earneſtly entreat and exhort all Chriſtians againſt them? This you will find at large, if you will peruſe that and many other of his pious Writings.

Thus you ſee, how little you have got by this Quotation, and how you have miſt your Aim, in bringing that Reverend Father to Countenance your Dreams and Deluſions.

But you have one Twig more to hang by, and that is the Authority of Biſhop *Wilkins*: How far that will hold ſhall be examined in my next, with which if you have nothing more to offer, I purpoſe to cloſe up. I am, Sir, *Yours*

June 25, 1697. M. H.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

To J. M.

SIR,

I Shewed in my laſt, what little Countenance your Conventicles and Free Prayer, could find from the Authority of Biſhop *Hall*. I come now to ſee, whether they are like to find, any better from the Authority of Biſhop *Wilkins*. This is your laſt Refuge, and if this Prop fails, your Cauſe may be in ſome danger of Sinking.

What you alledge from him, is out of a Book, Intitled *The Gift of Prayer*; from which I find you tranſcribing many paſſages, upon all occaſions.

In that Book, the learned Author endeavour'd to reduce Free conceived Prayer into an Art; a Deſign, as himſelf acknowledges, that was perfectly new, and never attempted by any before him. Now that muſt be acknowledg'd to be a very conſiderable prejudice to the Undertaking; for new Devices and Inventions in Religion, have been ever found to be very dangerous, and all Churches

Churches have felt the Miſchief and inconveniences of ſuch Novelties: He that walks in a new and untrodden Path, may eaſily loſe his Way; and many, by leaving the Antient Track, have found themſelves in the Briers; and therefore we are bid to Enquire for the old Ways, and to walk in them, it being much more ſafe to keep in the beaten Road of Antiquity, than to ſeek out, and wander in the By-paths of Innovations.

Jer. 6. 16.

But to come to the Book; We find that Great man in the Preface, wondring, that ſo little ſhould be ſaid, or written on that Subject, to help him in his Undertaking: Now this Wonder may ſoon ceaſe, by calling to mind, that all Chriſtian Churches in all times, and places, perform'd their Publick Worſhip, by Set preſcribed Forms; and ſo, as there was no uſe, ſo neither was there any need of this Artificial Gift; which is a ſufficient Reaſon of the Silence of Antiquity about it.

But when this Art began to be ſtudied, and put in practice, it ſoon became an Inſtrument of Diviſion, and is at this day, one of the principal Wiles and Artifices of Seducers. Accordingly therefore this Great man finding the bad Effects

fects of this new Experiment in Divinity, and obſerving how greedily it was catch'd at, and abus'd by Sectaries; thought fit to abandon this New Art, without adding, improving, or ſo much as correcting the Imperfections of it; and He himſelf to his dying day, became a conſtant frequenter of the Publick Prayers of the Church; and likewiſe, according to the Duty of his Office, ſtrictly kept his Clergy to them.

But the better to clear up this Matter, you muſt conſider, Sir, the Time of the writing of that Book, together with the Occaſion and End for which 'twas written; and then you will ſoon ſee, what little ſtreſs is to be laid upon it.

For the Time of writing it, 'twas when the Liturgy and Diſcipline of the Church of *England*, were by a prevailing Faction laid aſide, and all godly Forms of Prayer decry'd, at which time a whole Deluge of Errors, and new Opinions, broke in upon us; and by the help of Free Prayer, were vented and ſpread abroad; to the great increaſe of Sects and Schiſms among us: By this means Men loſt the Reverence that is due to the Divine Majeſty, beſpeaking him in a looſe, careleſs, and indecent man-

manner; and the Solemnity of Prayer was proſtituted to vile, and ſecular purpoſes.

Now to remedy thoſe Evils, this Great Man, wrote this Book, to direct Men in this Duty, when they were deprived of the Aſſiſtance of Forms; and to preſerve, if poſſible, ſome Senſe in their Prayers, at a time when there was ſo little of it to be heard.

Moreover, if we conſider the manner and model drawn up by this Reverend Perſon for this purpoſe, we ſhall find it in effect to be This.

When one ſort of Forms were cryed down, he endeavoured to bring up another; that is, when Book-Forms were removed by the ſubtlety of Deſigning
p. 11. Men, he endeavoured to ſet up Mental-Forms, or repeating their Prayers by memory, which he ſtiles, An inviſible Book for the Regiſter of our Thoughts; hoping thereby to keep up that ſenſe, and ſerioufneſs, that was requiſite in this Duty; there being but little difference (as he tells us) betwixt Repeating by memory, and Reading out of a Book: That this was the main drift of the Author in that Book, appears by theſe following things.

Firſt,

Firſt, He forbid's Men to depend altogether upon ſudden Suggeſtions, or Effuſions, as if it were, A Quenching or Confinement of the Spirit, to be furniſhed before-hand with Matter, and Expreſſions for this Service. In another place, he requires them, To prepare themſelves by ſtudy and premeditation, for this Duty; that is, (as appears by what is mentioned before,) to lay up both Matter and Words, in their Memory, for the more decent and orderly performance of it. Again, he condemns leavning theſe things to ſuddain Infuſion, which occaſions Mens beſpeaking God Almighty, in a looſe and careleſs manner. Furthermore, he would have them ſettle and compoſe their Thoughts, or fix theſe things in their Memory, for the more ſolemn performance of this Duty, that they may the better avoid all idle, impertinent, and wild Expreſſions; the uſual Embelliſhments of Extempore-Prayer. p. 10. p. 13. p. 3. 18 p. 19.

Secondly, He condemns all Affectation of varying Words and Phraſes in Prayer, by which means Men become expos'd to empty, vain, and unſeemly Expreſſions: Now you know (Sir) that the great difference between Forms and p. 17.

Free Prayer is, that in the former the ſame Words are uſed upon the ſame occaſions, and the latter changes Phraſes, without any neceſſity; and 'tis well known that the chief Excellency of the conceived Prayers of Sectaries, lies in this vanity of Variation, which this Great Man ſeverely condemns.

Thirdly, He condemns all Affectation of Length, which you know is one of the great Ornaments and Attendants of Free Prayer; and to avoid this Prolixity, he cautions againſt all empty Repetitions and Digreſſions, letting us know, that God is in Heaven, and we are upon Earth; therefore our Words ſhould be few.

p. 17.
p. 19.
Eccl. 5. 2.

Fourthly, This Author diſtinguiſheth between Praying in Publick with others; and Praying Secretly betwixt God and our own Souls; allowing Men in ſecret to take a greater Liberty of enlarging themſelves in their own Expreſſions; which though not in themſelves ſo ſignificant, and proper, may yet ſuit their Minds, and ſerve to ſet forth their own immediate Thoughts: But in Publick Prayers, where we are the Mouth of others, and ſhould engage the Affections of thoſe that joyn with us, there

p. 16.

there greater care muſt be taken, that our Expreſſions be ſo proper and deliberate, as may be moſt Effectual to that End; and for that purpoſe prefers premeditated Forms, wherein Matter and Words are prepared; before haſty and preſent Conceptions.

In a word, this Reverend Author, places the great work and buſineſs of Prayer, in the Heart, which he ſtiles the Life and Spirit of it, and conſequently the Words are but the Carkaeſs and Shell of it; adding withal, that 'tis not eſſential to Prayer that it be either read, or rehears'd by Memory, but that it be delivered with Underſtanding, and ſuitable Affections, with Humility and Confidence, and an Inward ſenſe of our Condition; and therefore wills Chriſtians not to ſit down ſatisfied with their Book-Prayer, but to endeavour to imprint it in their Memory, that they may go on to perfection; withal, narrowly watching their Hearts, for fear of that Lip-ſervice and Formality, which in ſuch caſes Men are more eſpecially expos'd to p. 2. 3. p. 10. 11.

The plain Senſe then of that great Man ſeems to be this, (*ſc.*) When the Publick Liturgy was aboliſh'd

and all Book-Forms were cryed down, he labour'd to teach Men to Pray by Memory; and to that end willed them to premeditate and to prepare both Matter and Words, before-hand; not affecting Length or Variations, nor leaving ſo weighty a Duty to ſudden and preſent Conceptions, for fear of falling into crude, idle, and impertinent Expreſſions: And tho' in ſecret Prayers he allows a greater Latitude, yet in Publick he directs them to make uſe of premeditated Forms, to preſerve the Solemnity and Reverence of Publick Worſhip. And what wiſer Expedient could be thought of in thoſe unhappy Times, when all pious preſcribed Forms were thrown out of the Church, and only the Froth and Vanity of Mens Brains cryed up in their room?

That this was the Senſe of that Learned Author, appears by his own practice, which is a truer Indication of Mens Minds, than Words or Writings; for when the Liturgy of the Church was reviv'd, and the ancient Order and Uniformity of Publick Worſhip reſtor'd, he ſoon laid aſide this unpoliſh'd, and by many unpracticable Art, and betook himſelf to the uſe of the Eſtabliſhed Devotion;

votion; and not only ſo, but advis'd and required all thoſe over whom he had any Power, to do the ſame.

The preſent Reverend and Learned Biſhop of *Coventry* and *Litchfield*, who preach'd his Funeral Sermon, in the Character he gives of him, among other things, tells us, how he aſſerted the Liturgy and the Rites of it; how he conform'd himſelf to every thing that was commanded; and likewiſe brought others to Conformity, even ſome eminent Men in his Dioceſs: Yea, that he endeavour'd to bring in all that came within his reach; and might have had farther ſucceſs, if God had pleaſed to continue him.

And now all things conſider'd, what have you gain'd from the Authority of this Reverend Prelate, whom you have ſo often quoted and inſiſted upon? Does this make for the neglect of Publick Forms of Prayer, in quiet and ſettled Times, or the ſetting up Free Pray- againſt them, where they are duly Eſtabliſhed? Do not Caſes of neceſſity allow of many things which cannot be ſo well juſtified when that Neceſſity ceaſes? *Diſtingue Tempora* was an antient and wiſe piece of Advice, and will

help to ſolve and remove many Difficulties and if you conſider the Difference; as well as the Badneſs of the Times, for which this artificial Gift of Prayer was Calculated, it may well enough excuſe, if not juſtify the Attempt.

But becauſe Maturity of years ripens the Judgment, and Length of Days encreaſeth Knowledge, you may take a better Eſtimate of Mens Opinions from the Practice of their latter, and wiſer Age, than the Rawneſs and Raſhneſs of younger Years. If Time and Experience hath added any thing to your Knowledge, and you begin to ſee farther into this matter than formerly, let me adviſe you not to withſtand the Evidence of Truth, but to imitate the Example of this Great Man, and let your latter End be like his, which is the hearty wiſh of,

SIR,

Your affectionate Friend and Well-wiſher,

June 1. 1697.

M. H.

FINIS.